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THE
HISTORY
OF
CLARISSA HARLOWE,
IN A
SERIES OF LETTERS.

BY
S. RICHARDSON.

A NEW EDITION.

VOL. IV.

BASIL:

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MDCCXCII.



THE
HISTORY
OF
CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER I.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

Tuesday, *May 2.*

MERCURY, as the Fabulist tells us, having the curiosity to know the estimation he stood in among mortals, descended in disguise, and, in a statuary's shop, cheapened a Jupiter, then a Juno, then one, then another, of the *Dii majores*; and, at last, asked, What price that same statue of Mercury bore? O Sir, says the artist, buy one of the others, and I'll throw you in that for nothing.

How sheepish must the god of thieves look, upon this rebuff to his vanity!

So thou!—A thousand pounds wouldst thou give
VOL. IV. A

for the good opinion of this single Lady — To be only thought tolerably of, and not quite unworthy of her conversation, would make thee happy. And at parting last night, or rather this morning, thou madest me promise a few lines to Edgware, to let thee know what she thinks of thee, and of thy brethren.

Thy thousand pounds, Jack, is all thy own: for most heartily does she dislike ye all—Thee as much as any of the rest.

I am sorry for it too, as to thy part, for two reasons — One, that I think thy motive for thy curiosity was fear or consciousness: whereas that of the arch-thief was vanity, intolerable vanity: and he was, therefore, justly sent away with a blush upon his cheeks to heaven, and could not brag — The other, that I am afraid, if she dislikes thee, she dislikes me: for are we not birds of a feather?

I must never talk of reformation, she told me, having such companions, and taking such delight as I seemed to take, in their frothy conversation.

I, no more than you, Jack, imagined she could possibly like ye: but then, as my friends, I thought a person of her education would have been more sparing of her censures.

I don't know how it is, Belford, but women think themselves entitled to take any freedoms with us, while we are unpolite, forsooth, and I can't tell what, if we don't tell a pack of cursed lies, and make black white, in their favor—teaching us to be hypocrites, yet stigmatizing us, at other times, for deceivers.

I defended ye all as well as I could: but you know there was no attempting aught but a palliative defence, to one of her principles.

I will summarily give thee a few of my pleas.

“To the pure, every little deviation seemed offensive: yet I saw not, that there was any thing amiss the whole evening, either in the words or behaviour of any of my friends. Some people could talk but upon one or two subjects: she upon every one: no wonder, therefore, they talked to what they understood best; and to mere objects of sense. Had she honored us with more of her conversation, she would have been less disgusted with ours; for she saw how every one was prepared to admire her, whenever she opened her lips. You, in particular, had said, when she retired, that virtue itself spoke, when she spoke: but that you had such an awe upon you, after she had favored us with an observation or two on a subject started, that you should ever be afraid, in her company, to be found most exceptionable, when you intended to be least so.”

Plainly, she said, she neither liked my companions, nor the house she was in.

I liked not the house any more than she: though the people were very obliging, and she had owned they were less exceptionable to herself, than at first: and were we not about another of our own?

She did not like Miss Partington — Let her fortune be what it would, and she had heard a great deal said of her fortune, she should not chuse an intimacy with her. She thought it was a hardship to be put upon such a difficulty, as she was put

upon the preceding night, when there were lodgers in the front-house, whom they had reason to be freer with, than, upon so short an acquaintance, with her.

I pretended to be an utter stranger as to this particular; and, when she explained herself upon it, condemned Mrs. Sinclair's request, and called it a confident one.

She, artfully, made lighter of her denial of the girl for a bedfellow, than she thought of it, I could see that; for it was plain, she supposed there was room for me to think she had been either over-nice or over-cautious.

I offered to resent Mrs. Sinclair's freedom.

No; there was no great matter in it. It was best to let it pass. It might be thought more particular in her to deny such a request, than in Mrs. Sinclair to make it, or in Miss Partington to expect it to be complied with. But as the people below had a large acquaintance, she did not know how often she might have her retirements invaded, if she gave way. And, indeed, there were levities in the behaviour of that young Lady, which she could not so far pass over as to wish an intimacy with her.

I said, I liked Miss Partington as little as she could. Miss Partington was a silly young creature; who seemed too likely to justify the watchfulness of her guardians over her. — But, nevertheless, as to her general conversation and behaviour last night, I must own, that I thought the girl (for girl she was, as to discretion) not exceptionable; only carrying

herself like a free good natured creature who believed herself secure in the honor of her company.

It was very well said of me, she replied: but, if that young Lady were so well satisfied with her company, she must needs say, that I was very kind to suppose her such an innocent—For her own part, she had seen nothing of the London world: but thought, she must tell me plainly, that she never was in such company in her life; nor ever again wished to be in such.

There, Belford! —Worse off than Mercury! —Art thou not?

I was nettled. Hard would be the lot of more discreet women, as far as I knew, than Miss Partington, were they to be judged by so rigid a virtue as hers.

Not so, she said: but if I really saw nothing exceptionable to a virtuous mind, in that young person's behaviour, my ignorance of better behaviour was, she must needs tell me, as pitiable as hers: and it were to be wished, that minds so paired, for their own sakes, should never be separated.

See, Jack, what I get by my charity!

I thanked her heartily. But said, that I must take the liberty to observe, that good folks were generally so uncharitable, that, devil take me, if I would chuse to be good, were the consequence to be, that I must think hardly of the whole world besides.

She congratulated me upon my charity: but told me, that to enlarge her own, she hoped it would

not be expected of her to approve of the low company I had brought her into last night.

No exception for thee, Belford! — Safe is thy thousand pounds.

I saw not, I said, begging her pardon, that she liked any body (plain dealing for plain dealing, Jack! — Why then did she abuse my friends?) However, let me but know whom and what she did or did not like; and, if possible, I would like and dislike the very same persons and things.

She bid me then, in a pet, dislike myself.

Curfed severe! — Does she think she must not pay for it one day, or one night? — And if one, many; that's my comfort.

I was in such a train of being happy, I said, before my earnestness to procure her to favor my friends with her company, that I wished the devil had had as well my friends as Miss Partington — And yet I must say, that I saw not how good people could answer half their end, which is to reform the wicked by precept as well as example, were they to accompany only with the good.

I had like to have been blasted by two or three flashes of lightning from her indignant eyes; and she turned scornfully from me, and retired to her own apartment.

Once more, Jack, safe, as thou seest, are thy thousand pounds.

She says, I am not a polite man: but is she, in the instance before us, more polite for a woman?

And now, dost thou not think, that I owe my charmer some revenge for her cruelty in obliging

such a fine young creature, and so vast a fortune, as Miss Partington, to crowd into a press-bed with Dorcas the maid servant of the proud refuser? — Miss Partington too (with tears) declaring by Mrs. Sinclair, that would Mrs. Lovelace do her the honor of a visit at Barnet, the best bed and best room in her guardian's house should be at her service. Thinkest thou, that I could not guess at her dishonorable fears of me? — That she apprehended, that the supposed husband would endeavour to take possession of his own? — And that Miss Partington would be willing to contribute to such a piece of justice?

Thus, then, thou both remindest, and defiest me, charmer! — And since thou reliefst more on thy own precaution than upon my honor; be it unto thee, fair one, as thou apprehendest!

And now, Jack, let me know, what thy opinion, and the opinions of thy brother varlets, are of my Gloriana.

I have just now heard, that Hannah hopes to be soon well enough to attend her young Lady, when in London. It seems the girl has had no physician. I must send her one, out of pure love and respect to her mistress. Who knows but medicine may weaken nature, and strengthen the disease? — As her malady is not a fever, very likely it may do so. — But, perhaps, the wench's hopes are too forward. Blustering weather in this month yet. — And that is bad for rheumatic complaints.

LETTER II.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

Tuesday, *May 2.*

JUST as I had sealed up the inclosed, comes a letter to my beloved, in a cover to me, directed to Lord M.'s. From whom, thinkest thou? — From Mrs. Howe!

And what the contents?

How should I know, unless the dear creature had communicated them to me? But a very cruel letter I believe it is, by the effect it had upon her. The tears ran down her cheeks as she read it; and her color changed several times. No end of her persecutions, I think:

“What a cruelty in my fate!” said the sweet lamenter. — “Now the only comfort of my life must be given up!”

Miss Howe's correspondence, no doubt.

But should she be so much grieved at this? This correspondence was prohibited before, and that, to the daughter, in the strongest terms: but yet carried on by both; altho' a brace of impeccables, an't please ye. Could they expect, that a mother would not vindicate her authority? — And finding her prohibition ineffectual with her perverse daughter, was it not reasonable to suppose she would try what effect it would have upon her daughter's friend? — And now I believe the end will be effectually

answered: for my beloved, I dare say, will make a point of conscience of it.

I hate cruelty, especially in women; and should have been more concerned for this instance of it in Mrs. Howe, had I not had a stronger instance of the same in my beloved to Miss Partington; for how did she know, since she was so much afraid for herself, whom Dorcas might let in to that innocent and less watchful young Lady? But nevertheless I must needs own, that I am not very sorry for this prohibition, let it originally come from the Harlowes, or from whom it will; because I make no doubt, that it is owing to Miss Howe, in a great measure, that my beloved is so much upon her guard, and thinks so hardly of me. And who can tell, as characters here are so tender, and some disguises so flimsy, what consequences might follow this undutiful correspondence?—I say, therefore, I am not sorry for it: now will she not have any body to compare notes with: any body to alarm her: and I may be saved the guilt and disobligation of inspecting into a correspondence that has long made me uneasy.

How every thing works for me!—Why will this charming creature make such contrivances necessary, as will increase my trouble, and my guilt too, as some would account it? But why, rather I should ask, will she fight against her stars?

LETTER III.

Mr. BELFORD, To ROBERT LOVELACE, Esq.

Edgware, Tuesday Night, *May 2.*

WITHOUT staying for the promised letter from you to inform us what the Lady says of us, I write to tell you, that we are all of one opinion with regard to her; which is, that there is not of her age a finer woman in the world, as to her understanding. As for her person, she is at the age of bloom, and an admirable creature; a perfect beauty: but this poorer praise, a man, who has been honored with her conversation, can hardly descend to give; and yet she was brought amongst us contrary to her will.

Permit me, dear Lovelace, to be a means of saving this excellent creature from the dangers she hourly runs from the most plotting heart in the world. In a former, I pleaded your own family, Lord M.'s wishes particularly; and then I had not seen her: but, now, I join her sake, honor's sake, motives of justice, generosity, gratitude, and humanity, which are all concerned in the preservation of so fine a woman. Thou knowest not the anguish I should have had (whence arising, I cannot devise) had I not known before I set out this morning, that the incomparable creature had disappointed thee in thy cursed view of getting her to admit the specious Partington for a bedfellow.

I have done nothing but talk of this Lady ever since I saw her. There is something so awful, and yet so sweet, in her aspect, that were I to have the Virtues and the Graces all drawn in one piece, they should be taken, every one of them, from different airs and attitudes in her. She was born to adorn the age she was given to, and would be an ornament to the first dignity. What a piercing, yet gentle eye; every glance, I thought, mingled with love and fear of you! What a sweet smile darting through the cloud that overspread her fair face, demonstrating, that she had more apprehensions and grief at her heart, than she cared to express.

You may think what I am going to write too flighty; but, by my faith, I have conceived such a profound reverence for her sense and judgment, that, far from thinking the man excusable who should treat her basely, I am ready to regret that such an angel of a woman should even marry. She is in my eye all mind: and were she to meet with a man all mind likewise, why should the charming qualities she is mistress of, be endangered? Why should such an angel be plunged so low as into the vulgar offices of domestic life? Were she mine, I should hardly wish to see her a mother, unless there were a kind of moral certainty, that minds like hers could be propagated. For why, in short, should not the work of bodies be left to mere bodies? I know, that you yourself have an opinion of her little less exalted. Belton, Mowbray, Tourville, are all of my mind; are full of her praises; and

swear, it would be a million of pities to ruin a woman in whose fall none but devils can rejoice.

What must that merit and excellence be which can extort this from us, free-livers, like yourself, and all of us your partial friends, who have joined with you in your just resentments against the rest of her family, and offered our assistance to execute your vengeance on them? But we cannot think it reasonable, that you should punish an innocent creature, who loves you so well, and who is in your protection, and has suffered so much for you, for the faults of her relations.

And here, let me put a serious question or two. Thinkest thou, truly admirable as this Lady is, that the end thou proposest to thyself, if obtained, is answerable to the means, to the trouble thou givest thyself, and to the perfidies, tricks, stratagems, and contrivances thou hast already been guilty of, and still meditatest? In every real excellence she surpasses all her sex. But in the article thou seekest to subdue her for, a mere sensualist, a Partington, a Horton, a Martin, would make a sensualist a thousand times happier than she either will or can.

Sweet are the joys that come with willingness.

And wouldst thou make her unhappy for her whole life, and thyself not happy for a single moment?

Hitherto, it is not too late; and that, perhaps, is as much as can be said, if thou meanest to preserve her esteem and good opinion, as well as person; for

I think it is impossible she can get out of thy hands, now she is in this cursed house. O that damned hypocritical Sinclair, as thou callest her! How was it possible she should behave so speciously as she did all the time the Lady staid with us! — Be honest, and marry; and be thankful that she will condescend to have thee. If thou dost not, thou wilt be the worst of men; and wilt be condemned in this world and the next: as I am sure thou oughtest, and shouldest too, wert thou to be judged by one, who never before was so much touched in a woman's favor: and whom thou knowest to be

Thy partial friend,

J. BELFORD.

Our companions consented, that I should withdraw to write to the above effect. They can make nothing of the characters we write in; so I read this to them. They approve of it; and of their own motion each man would set his name to it. I would not delay sending it, for fear of some detestable scheme taking place.

THOMAS BELTON.

RICHARD MOWBRAY.

JAMES TOURVILLE.

Just now are brought me both yours. I vary not my opinion, nor forbear my earnest prayers to you in her behalf, notwithstanding her dislike of me.

LETTER IV.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

Wednesday, *May 3.*

WHEN I have already taken pains to acquaint thee in full with my views, designs, and resolutions, with regard to this admirable woman, it is very extraordinary that thou shouldst vapor as thou dost in her behalf, when I have made no trial, no attempt: and yet, givest it as thy opinion in a former letter, that advantage may be taken of the situation she is in; and that she may be overcome.

Most of thy reflections, particularly that which respects the difference as to the joys to be given by the virtuous and the libertine of the sex, are fitter to come in as after-reflections, than as antecedencies.

I own with thee, and with the poet, "That sweet are the joys that come with willingness" — But is it to be expected, that a woman of education, and a lover of forms, will yield before she is attacked? And have I so much as summoned this to surrender? I doubt not but I shall meet with difficulty. I must, therefore, make my first effort by surprise. There may possibly be some cruelty necessary: but there may be consent in struggle; there may be yielding in resistance. But the first conflict over, whether the following may not be weaker and weaker, till willingness ensue, is the point to be tried. I will illustrate what I have said by the

simile of a bird new caught. We begin, when boys, with birds; and, when grown up, go on to women; and both, perhaps, in turn, experience our sportive cruelty.

Hast thou not observed the charming gradations by which the ensnared volatile has been brought to bear with its new condition? How, at first, refusing all sustenance, it beats and bruises itself against its wires, till it makes its gay plumage fly about, and overspread its well secured cage. Now it gets out its head; sticking only at its beautiful shoulders: Then, with difficulty, drawing back its head, it gasps for breath, and, erectedly perched, with meditating eyes, first surveys, and then attempts, its wired canopy. As it gets breath, with renewed rage, it beats and bruises again its pretty head and sides, bites the wires, and pecks at the fingers of its delighted tamer. Till at last, finding its efforts ineffectual, quite tired and breathless, it lays itself down, and pants at the bottom of the cage, seeming to bemoan its cruel fate, and forfeited liberty. And after a few days its struggles to escape diminishing, as it finds it to no purpose to attempt it, its new habitation becomes familiar; and it hops about from perch to perch, resumes its wonted cheerfulness and every day sings a song to amuse itself, and reward its keeper.

Now, let me tell thee, that I have known a bird actually starve itself, and die with grief, at its being caught and caged. But never did I meet with a woman who was so silly. — Yet have I heard the dear souls most vehemently threaten their own lives on such an occasion. But it is saying nothing

in a woman's favor, if we do not allow her to have more sense than a bird. And yet we must all own, that it is more difficult to catch a bird than a Lady.

To pursue the comparison—If the disappointment of the captivated Lady be very great, she will threaten, indeed, as I said: she will even refuse her sustenance for some time, especially if you entreat her much, and she thinks she gives you concern by her refusal. But then the stomach of the dear fullen one will soon return. 'Tis pretty to see how she comes to by degrees: pressed by appetite, she will first steal, perhaps, a weeping morsel by herself; then be brought to piddle and sigh, and sigh and piddle, before you; now and then, if her viands be unsavory, swallowing with them a relishing tear or two: then she comes to eat and drink, to oblige you: then resolves to live for your sake: her exclamations will, in the next place, be turned into blandishments; her vehement upbraidings into gentle murmurings—How dare you, traitor!—into How could you, dearest? She will draw you to her, instead of pushing you from her: no longer, with unsheathed claws, will she resist you; but, like a pretty, playful, wanton kitten, with gentle paws, and concealed talons, tap your cheek, and with intermingled smiles, and tears, and caresses, implore your consideration for her, and your constancy: all the favor she then has to ask of you!—And this is the time, were it given to man to confine himself to one object, to be happier every day than other.

Now,

Now, Belford, were I to go no further than I have gone with my beloved Miss Harlowe, how shall I know the difference between her and another bird? To let her fly now, what a pretty jest would that be! — How do I know, except I try, whether she may not be brought to sing me a fine song, and to be as well contented as I have brought other birds to be, and very shy ones too?

But now let us reflect a little upon the confounded partiality of us human creatures. I can give two or three familiar, and, if they were not familiar, they would be shocking, instances of the cruelty both of men and women, with respect to other creatures, perhaps, as worthy as (at least more innocent than) themselves. By my soul, Jack, there is more of the savage in human nature than we are commonly aware of. Nor is it, after all, so much amiss, that we sometimes avenge the more innocent animals upon our own species.

To particulars.

How usual a thing is it for women as well as men, without the least remorse, to ensnare, to cage, and torment, and even with burning knitting-needles to put out the eyes of the poor feathered songster (thou seest I have not yet done with birds) which, however, in proportion to its bulk, has more life than themselves (for a bird is all soul); and of consequence has as much feeling as the human creature! When at the same time, if an honest fellow, by the gentlest persuasion, and the softest arts, has the good luck to prevail upon a mew'd up Lady to countenance her own escape, and she

consents to break cage, and be set a flying into the all-cheering air of liberty, mercy on us! what an outcry is generally raised against him!

Just like what you and I once saw raised in a paltry village near Chelmsford, after a poor hungry fox, who, watching his opportunity, had seized by the neck, and shouldered, a sleek-feathered goose: at what time we beheld the whole vicinage of boys and girls, old men, and old women, all the furrows and wrinkles of the latter filled up with malice for the time; the old men armed with prongs, pitchforks, clubs, and catsticks; the old women with mops, brooms, fire-shovels, tongs, and pokers; and the younger fry with dirt, stones, and brickbats, gathering as they ran like a snowball, in pursuit of the wind-outstripping prowler; all the mongrel curs of the circumjacentcies yelp, yelp, yelp, at their heels, completing the horrid chorus.

Remembrest thou not this scene? Surely thou must. My imagination, inflamed by a tender sympathy for the danger of the adventurous marauder, represents it to my eye, as if it were but yesterday. And dost not thou recollect how generously glad we were, as if our own case, that honest Reynard, by the help of a lucky stile, over which both old and young tumbled upon one another, and a winding course, escaped their brutal fury, and flying catsticks; and how, in fancy, we followed him to his undiscovered retreat; and imagined we beheld the intrepid thief enjoying his dear-earned purchase with a delight proportioned to his past danger?

I once made a charming little savage severely repent the delight she took in seeing her tabby favorite make cruel sport with a pretty sleek bead-eyed mouse, before she devoured it. Egad, my love, said I to myself, as I sat meditating the scene, I am determined to lie in wait for a fit opportunity to try how thou wilt like to be tost over my head, and be caught again: how thou wilt like to be patted from me, and pulled to me. Yet will I rather give life than take it away, as this barbarous quadrupede has at last done by her prey. And after all was over between my girl and me, I reminded her of the incident to which my resolution was owing.

Nor had I at another time any mercy upon the daughter of an old Epicure, who had taught the girl, without the least remorse, to roast lobsters alive; to cause a poor pig to be whipt to death; to scrape carp the contrary way of the scales, making them leap in the stew-pan, and dressing them in their own blood for sauce. And this for luxury-sake, and to provoke an appetite; which I had without stimulation, in my way, and that I can tell thee a very ravenous one.

Many more instances of the like nature could I give, were I to leave nothing to thyself, to show that the best take the same liberties, and, perhaps, worse, with some sort of creatures, that we take with others; all creatures still! and creatures too, as I have observed above, replete with strong life, and sensible feeling!—If, therefore, people pretend to mercy, let mercy go through all their actions.

I have read somewhere, That a merciful man is merciful to his beast.

So much at present for those parts of thy letter in which thou urgest to me motives of compassion for the Lady.

But I guess at thy principal motive in this thy earnestness in behalf of this charming creature. I know that thou correspondest with Lord M. . who is impatient, and has long been desirous, to see me shackled. And thou wantest to make a merit with the uncle, with a view to one of his nieces. But knowest thou not, that my consent will be wanting to complete thy wishes? — And what a commendation will it be of thee to such a girl as Charlotte, when I shall acquaint her with the affront thou puttest upon the whole sex, by asking, Whether I think my reward, when I have subdued the most charming woman in the world, will be equal to my trouble? — Which, thinkest thou, a woman of spirit will soonest forgive; the undervaluing varlet who can put such a question; or him, who prefers the pursuit and conquest of a fine woman to all the joys of life? Have I not known even a virtuous woman, as she would be thought, vow everlasting antipathy to a man who gave out, that she was too old for him to attempt? And did not Essex's personal reflection on queen Elizabeth, that she was old and crooked, contribute more to his ruin, than his treason?

But another word or two, as to thy objection relating to my trouble and reward.

Does not the keen foxhunter endanger his neck

and his bones in pursuit of a vermin, which, when killed, is neither fit food for men nor dogs?

Do not the hunters of the noble game value the venison less than the sport?

Why then should I be reflected upon, and the sex affronted, for my patience and perseverance in the most noble of all chases; and for not being a poacher in love, as thy question may be made to imply?

Learn of thy master, for the future, to treat more respectfully a sex that yields to us our principal diversions and delights.

Proceed anon.

LETTER V.

Mr. LOVELACE. In continuation.

WELL sayest thou, that mine is the most plotting heart in the world. Thou dost me honor; and I thank thee heartily. Thou art no bad judge. How like Boileau's parson, I strut behind my double chin! Am I not obliged to deserve thy compliment? And wouldst thou have me repent of a murder before I have committed it?

"The Virtues and Graces are this Lady's handmaids. She was certainly born to adorn the age she was given to."—Well said, Jack—"And would be an ornament to the first dignity." But what praise is that, unless the first dignity were adorned

with the first merit? — Dignity ! gewgaw ! — First dignity ! thou idiot ! — Art thou , who knowest me , so taken with ermine and tinsel ? — I , who have won the gold , am only fit to wear it. For the future , therefore , correct thy style , and proclaim her the ornament of the happiest man , and (respecting herself and sex) the greatest conqueror in the world.

Then , that she loves me , as thou imaginest , by no means appears clear to me. Her conditional offers to renounce me ; the little confidence she places in me ; entitle me to ask , What merit can she have with a man , who won her in spite of herself , and who fairly in set and obstinate battle , took her prisoner ?

As to what thou inferrest from her eye when with us , thou knowest nothing of her heart from that , if thou imaginest there was one glance of love shot from it. Well did I note her eye , and plainly did I see , that it was all but just civil disgust to me and to the company I had brought her into. Her early retiring that night , against all entreaty , might have convinced thee , that there was very little of the gentle in her heart for me. And her eye never knew what it was to contradict her heart.

She is , thou sayest , all mind. So say I. But why shouldst thou imagine , that such a mind as hers , meeting with such a one as mine ; and , to dwell upon the word , meeting with an inclination in hers , should not propagate minds like her own ?

Were I to take thy stupid advice , and marry ; what a figure should I make in rakish annals ! The

Lady in my power: yet not having intended to put herself in my power: declaring against love, and a rebel to it: so much open-eyed caution: no confidence in my honor: her family expecting the worst has passed; herself seeming to expect, that worst will be attempted: (Priscilla Partington for that!) What! wouldst thou not have me act in character?

But why callest thou the Lady innocent? And why sayest thou she loves me?

By innocent, with regard to me, and not taken as a general character, I must insist upon it, she is not innocent. Can she be innocent, who, by wishing to shackle me in the prime and glory of my youth, with such a capacity as I have for noble mischief, would make my perdition more certain, were I to break, as I doubt I should, the most solemn vow I could make? I say, no man ought to take even a common oath, who thinks he cannot keep it. This is conscience! This is honor! — And when I think I can keep the marriage-vow, then will it be time to marry.

No doubt of it, as thou sayest, the devils would rejoice in the fall of such a woman. But this is my confidence, that I shall have it in my power to marry when I will. And if I do her this justice, shall I not have a claim to her gratitude? And will she not think herself the obliged, rather than the obliger? Then, let me tell thee, Belford, it is impossible so far to hurt the morals of this Lady, as thou and thy brother-varlets have hurt others of the sex, who now are casting about the town firebrands and double death. Take ye that thistle to mumble upon.

* * *

A short interruption. I now resume.

That the morals of this Lady cannot fail, is a consideration that will lessen the guilt on both sides. And if, when subdued, she knows but how to middle the matter between virtue and love, then will she be a wife for me: for already I am convinced, that there is not a woman in the world that is love-proof and plot-proof, if she be not the person.

And now imagine (the charmer overcome) thou seest me sitting supinely cross-kneed, reclining on my sofa, the God of Love dancing in my eyes, and rejoicing in every mantling feature; the sweet rogue, late such a proud rogue, wholly in my power, moving up slowly to me, at my beck, with heaving sighs, half-pronounced upbraidings from murmuring lips, her finger in her eye, and quickening her pace at my "Come hither, dearest?"

One hand stuck in my side, the other extended to encourage her bashful approach—Kiss me, love!—Sweet, as Jack Belford says, are the joys that come with willingness.

She tenders her purple mouth (her coral lips will be purple then, Jack!) sigh not so deeply my beloved!—Happier hours await thy humble love, than did thy proud resistance.

Once more bend to my ardent lips the swanny glossiness of a neck late so stately.—

There's my precious!—

Again!—

Obliging loveliness!—

O my ever blooming glory!—I have tryed thee enough. —To morrow's fun—

Then I rise, and fold to my almost-talking heart the throbbing bosomed charmer.

And now shall thy humbled pride confess its obligation to me!—

To morrow's fun—And then I disengage myself from the bashful passive, and stalk about the room —To morrow's fun shall gild the altar at which my vows shall be paid thee!

Then, Jack, the rapture! then the darted sunbeams from her gladdened eye, drinking up at one sip, the precious distillation from the pearl-dropt cheek! Then hands ardently folded, eyes seeming to pronounce, God bless my Lovelace! to supply the joy-locked tongue: her transports too strong, and expression too weak, to give utterance to her grateful meanings!— All — all the studies — all the studies of her future life vowed and devoted (when she can speak) to acknowledge and return the perpetuated obligation!

If I could bring my charmer to this, would it not be the eligible of eligibles? — Is it not worth trying for? — As I said, I can marry her when I will. She can be nobody's but mine, neither for shame, nor by choice, nor yet by address: for who, that knows my character, believes that the worst she dreads, is now to be dreaded?

I have the highest opinion that man can have (thou knowest I have) of the merit and perfections of this admirable woman; of her virtue and honor too; altho' thou, in a former, art of opinion, that

she may be overcome. Am I not, therefore, obliged to go further, in order to contradict thee, and, as I have often urged, to be sure, that she really is what I really think her to be, and, if I am ever to marry her, hope to find her?

Then this Lady is the mistress of our passions: no one ever had to so much perfection the art of moving. This all her family know, and have equally feared and revered her for it. This I know too; and doubt not more and more to experience. How charmingly must this divine creature warble forth (if a proper occasion be given) her melodious elegiacs! — Infinite beauties are there in a weeping eye. I first taught the two nymphs below to distinguish the several accents of the lamentable in a new subject, and how admirably some, more than others, become their distresses.

But to return to thy objections — Thou wilt, perhaps, tell me, in the names of thy brethren, as well as in thy own name, That among all the objects of your respective attempts, there was not one of the rank and merit of my charming Miss Harlowe.

But let me ask, Has it not been a constant maxim with us, that the greater the merit on the woman's side, the nobler the victory on the man's? And as to rank, sense of honor, sense of shame, pride of family, may make ruffled rank get up, and shake itself to rights: and if any thing come of it, such a one may suffer only in her pride, by being obliged to take up with a second-rate match instead of a first; and, as it may fall out, be the happier, as well as

the more useful, for the misadventure; since (taken off her public gaddings, and domesticated by her disgrace) she will have reason to think herself obliged to the man who has saved her from further reproach; while her fortune and alliance will lay an obligation upon him; and her past fall, if she have prudence and consciousness, will be his present and future security.

But a poor girl (such a one as my Rosebud for instance) having no recalls from education; being driven out of every family that pretends to reputation; persecuted most, perhaps, by such as have only kept their secret better; and having no refuge to fly to—The common, the stews, the street, is the fate of such a poor wretch; penury, want, and disease, her sure attendants; and an untimely end, perhaps, closes the miserable scene.

And will ye not now all join to say, that it is more manly to attack a lion than a sheep?—Thou knowest, that I always illustrated my eagleship, by aiming at the noblest quarries; and by disdaining to make a stoop at wrens, phyl-tits*, and wag-tails.

The worst respecting myself, in the case before me, is, that my triumph, when completed, will be so glorious a one, that I shall never be able to keep up to it. All my future attempts must be

* Phyl-tits, q. d. Phillis-tits, in opposition to Tom-tits. It needs not now be observed, that Mr. Lovelace, in the wanton gaiety of his heart, often takes liberties of coining words and phrases in his letters to this his familiar friend. See his ludicrous reason for it in Vol. III. Let. xxi. parag. antepenult.

poor to this. I shall be as unhappy, after a while, from my reflections upon this conquest, as Don John of Austria was, in his, on the renowned victory of Lepanto, when he found that none of his future achievements could keep pace with his early glory.

I am sensible, that my pleas and my reasonings may be easily answered, and, perhaps, justly censured; but by whom censured? Not by any of the confraternity, whose constant course of life, even long before I became your general, to this hour, has justified what ye now, in a fit of squeamishness, and through envy, condemn. Having, therefore, vindicated myself and my intentions to you, that is all I am at present concerned for.

Be convinced then, that I (according to our principles) am right, thou wrong; or, at least, be silent. But I command thee to be convinced. And in thy next, be sure to tell me that thou art.

LETTER VI.

Mr. BELFORD, To ROBERT LOVELACE, Esq.

Edgware, Thursday, *May 4.*

I KNOW that thou art so abandoned a man, that to give thee the best reasons in the world against what thou hast once resolved upon, will be but acting the madman whom once we saw trying to buffet down a hurricane with his hat. I hope, however, that the Lady's merit will still avail her with thee. But if thou persistest; if thou wilt avenge thyself on this sweet lamb, which thou hast singled out from a flock thou hatest, for the faults of the dogs who kept it: if thou art not to be moved by beauty, by learning, by prudence, by innocence, all shining out in one charming object; but she must fall, fall by the man whom she has chosen for her protector; I would not for a thousand worlds have thy crime to answer for.

Upon my faith, Lovelace, the subject sticks with me, notwithstanding I find I have not the honor of the Lady's good opinion. And the more, when I reflect upon her father's brutal curse, and the villainous hard-heartedness of all her family. But, nevertheless, I should be desirous to know (if thou wilt proceed) by what gradations, arts, and contrivances, thou effectest thy ungrateful purpose. And, O Lovelace, I conjure thee, if thou art a man, let not the specious devils thou hast brought

her among, be suffered to triumph over her; nor make her the victim of unmanly artifices. If she yield to fair seduction, if I may so express myself; if thou canst raise a weakness in her by love, or by arts not inhuman; I shall the less pity her: and shall then conclude, that there is not a woman in the world who can resist a bold and resolute lover.

A messenger is just now arrived from my uncle. The mortification, it seems, is got to his knee; and the surgeons declare, that he cannot live many days. He, therefore, sends for me directly, with these shocking words, "That I will come and close his eyes." My servant or his must of necessity be in town every day on his case, or on other affairs; and one of them shall regularly attend you for any letter or commands. It will be charity to write to me as often as you can. For altho' I am likely to be a considerable gainer by the poor man's death, yet I cannot say, that I at all love these scenes of death and the doctor so near me. The doctor and death I should have said; for that's the natural order, and, generally speaking, the one is but the harbinger to the other.

If, therefore, you decline to oblige me, I shall think you are displeased with my freedom. But let me tell you at the same time, that no man has a right to be displeased at freedoms taken with him for faults he is not ashamed to be guilty of.

J. BELFORD.

LETTER VII.

Miss CLARISSA HARLOWE, To Miss HOWE.

I THANK you and Mr. Hickman for his letter, sent me with such kind expedition; and proceed to obey my dear menacing tyranness.

She then gives the particulars of what passed between herself and Mr. Lovelace on Tuesday morning, in relation to his four friends, and to Miss Partington, pretty much to the same effect as in Mr. Lovelace's Letter, N^o. i. And then proceeds:

He is constantly accusing me of over-scrupulousness. He says, "I am always out of humor with him: that I could not have behaved more reservedly to Mr. Solmes: and that it is contrary to all his hopes and notions, that he should not, in so long a time, find himself able to inspire the person whom he hoped so soon to have the honor to call his; with the least distinguishing tenderness for him beforehand."

Silly and partial encroacher! not to know to what to attribute the reserve I am forced to treat him with! But his pride has eaten up his prudence. It is, indeed, a dirty low pride, that has swallowed up the true pride, which should have set him above the vanity that has overrun him.

Yet he pretends, that he has no pride but in

obliging me: and is always talking of his reverence and humility, and such sort of stuff: but of this I am sure, that he has, as I observed the first time I saw him, too much regard to his own person, greatly to value that of his wife, marry he whom he will: and I must be blind, if I did not see, that he is exceedingly vain of his external advantages, and of that address, which, if it has any merit in it to an outward eye, is perhaps owing more to his confidence, than to any thing else.

Have you not beheld the man when I was your happy guest, as he walked to his chariot, looking about him, as if to observe what eyes his specious person and air had attracted?

But, indeed, we have seen homely coxcombs as proud as if they had persons to be proud of; at the same time that it was apparent, that the pains they took about themselves but the more exposed their defects.

The man who is fond of being thought more or better than he is, as I have often observed, but provokes a scrutiny into his pretensions; and that generally produces contempt. For pride, as I believe I have heretofore said, is an infallible sign of weakness; of something wrong in the head or heart, or in both. He that exalts himself, insults his neighbour; who is provoked to question him even that merit, which, were he modest, would, perhaps, be allowed to be his due.

You will say, that I am very grave: and so I am. Mr. Lovelace is extremely sunk in my opinion since Monday night: nor see I before me any thing that
can

can afford me a pleasing hope. For what, with a mind so unequal as his, can be my best hope?

I think I mentioned to you, in my former, that my clothes were brought me. You fluttered me so, that I am not sure I did. But I know I designed to mention that they were. They were brought me on Thursday; but neither my few guineas with them, nor any of my books, except a Drexelius on Eternity, the good old Practice of Piety, and a Francis Spira. My brother's wit, I suppose. He thinks he does well to point out death and despair to me. I wish for the one, and every now and then am on the brink of the other.

You will the less wonder at my being so very solemn, when, added to the above, and to my uncertain situation, I tell you, that they have sent me with these books a letter from my cousin Morden. It has set my heart against Mr. Lovelace. Against myself too. I send it inclosed. If you please, my dear, you may read it here.

Col. MORDEN, To Miss CLARISSA HARLOWE.

Florence, *April* 13.

I AM extremely concerned to hear of a difference betwixt the rest of a family so near and dear to me, and you still dearer to me than any of the rest.

My cousin James has acquainted me with the offers you have had, and with your refusals. I

wonder not at either. Such charming promises at so early an age as when I left England; and those promises, as I have often heard, so greatly exceeded, as well in your person as mind; how much must you be admired! How few must there be worthy of you!

Your parents, the most indulgent in the world, to a child the most deserving, have given way it seems to your refusals of several gentlemen. They have contented themselves at last to name one with earnestness to you, because of the address of another whom they cannot approve.

They had not reason it seems from your behaviour to think you greatly averse: so they proceeded: perhaps too hastily for a delicacy like yours. But when all was fixed on their parts, and most extraordinary terms concluded in your favor; terms, which abundantly show the gentleman's just value for you; you flew off with a warmth and vehemence little suited to that sweetness which gave a grace to all your actions.

I know very little of either of the gentlemen: but of Mr. Lovelace I know more than of Mr. Solmes. I wish I could say more to his advantage than I can. As to every qualification but one, your brother owns there is no comparison. But that one outweighs all the rest together. It cannot be thought that Miss Clarissa Harlowe will dispense with morals in a husband.

What, my dearest cousin, shall I first plead to you on this occasion? Your duty, your interest, your temporal, and your eternal welfare, do, and

may all, depend upon this single point—The morality of a husband.—A woman who has a wicked husband may find it difficult to be good, and out of her power to do good; and is, therefore, in a worse situation than the man can be in, who has a bad wife. You preserve all your religious regards, I understand. I wonder not that you do. I should have wondered, had you not. But what can you promise yourself, as to perseverance in them, with an immoral husband.

If your parents and you differ in sentiment on this important occasion, let me ask you, my dear cousin, who ought to give way? I own to you, that I should have thought there could not any where have been a more suitable match for you, than with Mr. Lovelace, had he been a moral man. I should have very little to say against a man, of whose actions I am not to set up myself as a judge, did he not address my cousin. But, on this occasion, let me tell you, my dear Clarissa, that Mr. Lovelace cannot possibly deserve you. He may reform, you'll say: but he may not. Habit is not soon or easily shaken off. Libertines, who are libertines in defiance of talents, of superior lights, of conviction, hardly ever reform but by miracle, or by incapacity. Well do I know mine own sex. Well am I able to judge of the probability of the reformation of a licentious young man, who has not been fastened upon by sickness, by affliction, by calamity: who has a prosperous run of fortune before him: his spirits high: his will uncontrollable: the company he

keeps, perhaps such as himself, confirming him in all his courses, assisting him in all his enterprises.

As to the other gentleman, suppose, my dear cousin, you do not like him at present, it is far from being unlikely, that you will hereafter: perhaps the more, for not liking him now. He can hardly sink lower in your opinion: he may rise. Very seldom is it, that high expectations are so much as tolerably answered. How indeed can they, when a fine and extensive imagination carries its expectation infinitely beyond reality, in the highest of our sublunary enjoyments? A woman adorned with such an imagination sees no defect in a favored object (the less, if she be not conscious of any wilful fault in herself) till it is too late to rectify the mistakes occasioned by her generous credulity.

But suppose a person of your talents were to marry a man of inferior talents; who, in this case, can be so happy in herself, as Miss Clarissa Harlowe? What delight do you take in doing good! How happily do you devote the several portions of the day to your own improvement, and to the advantage of all that move within your sphere! — And then such is your taste, such are your acquirements in the politer studies, and in the politer amusements; such your excellence in all the different parts of oeconomy fit for a young Lady's inspection and practice; that your friends would wish you to be taken off as little as possible by regards that may be called merely personal.

But as to what may be the consequence respecting yourself, respecting a young Lady of your talents,

from the preference you are suspected to give to a libertine, I would have you, my dear cousin, consider what that may be. A mind so pure, to mingle with a mind impure! And will not such a man as this engross all your solitudes? Will he not perpetually fill you with anxieties for him and for yourself? — The divine and civil powers defied, and their sanctions broken through by him, on every not merely accidental, but meditated occasion. To be agreeable to him, and to hope to preserve an interest in his affections, you must probably be obliged to abandon all your own laudable pursuits. You must enter into his pleasures and distastes. You must give up your own virtuous companions for his profligate ones—Perhaps be forsaken by yours, because of the scandal he daily gives. Can you hope, cousin, with such a man as this, to be long so good as you now are? If not, consider which of your present laudable delights you would chuse to give up? Which of his culpable ones to follow him in? How could you brook to go backward, instead of forward, in those duties which you now so exemplarily perform? And how do you know, if you once give way, where you shall be suffered, where you shall be able, to stop?

Your brother acknowledges, that Mr. Solmes is not near so agreeable in person as Mr. Lovelace. But what is person, with such a Lady as I have the honor to be now writing to? He owns likewise, that he has not the address of Mr. Lovelace: but what a mere personal advantage is a plausible address, without morals? A woman had better take a husband

whose manners she were to fashion, than to find them ready fashioned to her hand, at the price of his morality! a price that is often paid for travelling accomplishments. O my dear cousin, were you but with us here at Florence, or at Rome, or at Paris (where also I resided for many months) to see the gentlemen whose supposed rough English manners at setting out are to be polished, and what their improvements are in their return through the same places, you would infinitely prefer the man in his first stage to the same man in his last. You find the difference on their return — A fondness for foreign fashions, an attachment to foreign vices, a supercilious contempt of his own country and countrymen (himself more despicable than the most despicable of those he despises); these, with an unblushing effrontery, are too generally the attainments that concur to finish the travelled gentleman!

Mr. Lovelace, I know, deserves to have an exception made in his favor; for he is really a man of parts and learning: he was esteemed so both here and at Rome; and a fine person, and a generous turn of mind, gave him great advantages. But you need not be told, that a libertine man of sense does infinitely more mischief, than a libertine of weak parts is able to do. And this I will tell you farther, that it was Mr. Lovelace's own fault that he was not still more respected than he was, among the *Literati* here. There were, in short, some liberties in which he indulged himself, that endangered his person and his liberty; and made the best and most worthy of those who honored him with their notice,

give him up, and his stay both at Florence and at Rome shorter than he designed.

This is all I chuse to say of Mr. Lovelace. I had much rather have had reason to give him a quite contrary character. But as to rakes or libertines in general, I, who know them well, must be allowed, because of the mischiefs they have always in their hearts, and too often in their power to do your sex, to add still a few more words upon this topic.

A libertine, my dear cousin, a plotting, an intriguing libertine, must be generally remorseless — Unjust he must always be. The noble rule, of doing to others what he would have done to himself, is the first rule he breaks; and every day he breaks it; the oftener, the greater his triumph. He has great contempt for your sex. He believes no woman chaste, because he is a profligate. Every woman who favors him, confirms him in his wicked incredulity. He is always plotting to extend the mischiefs he delights in. If a woman loves such a man, how can she bear the thought of dividing her interest in his affections, with half the town, and that, perhaps, the dregs of it? Then so sensual! — How will a young Lady of your delicacy bear with so sensual a man? A man who makes a jest of his vows; and who, perhaps, will break your spirit by the most unmanly insults. To be a libertine, at setting out, all compunction, all humanity, must be overcome. To continue to be a libertine, is to continue to be every thing vile and inhuman. Prayers, tears, and the most abject submission, are but fuel

to his pride: wagering, perhaps, with lewd companions, and, not improbably, with lewder women, upon instances which he boasts of to them of your patient sufferings, and broken spirit, and bringing them home to witness to both.

I write what I know has been.

I mention not fortunes squandered, estates mortgaged, or sold, and posterity robbed—Nor yet a multitude of other evils, too gross, too shocking, to be mentioned to a person of your delicacy.

All these, my dear cousin, to be shunned, all the evils I have named to be avoided; the power of doing all the good you have been accustomed to do, preserved, nay, increased, by the separate provision that will be made for you: your charming diversions, and exemplary employments, all maintained; and every good habit perpetuated: and all by one sacrifice, the fading pleasure of the eye! Who would not (since every thing is not to be met with in one man) who would not to preserve so many essentials, give up so light, so unpermanent a pleasure?

Weigh all these things, which I might insist upon to more advantage, did I think it needful to one of your prudence—Weigh them well, my beloved cousin; and if it be not the will of your parents that you should continue single, resolve to oblige them; and let it not be said, that the powers of fancy shall (as in many others of your sex) be too hard for your duty and your prudence. The less agreeable the man, the more obliging the compli-

ance. Remember, that he is a sober man—A man who has reputation to lose, and whose reputation, therefore, is a security for his good behaviour to you.

You have an opportunity offered you to give the highest instance that can be given, of filial duty. Embrace it. It is worthy of you. It is expected from you; however, for your inclination sake, we may be sorry that you are called upon to give it. Let it be said, that you have been able to lay an obligation upon your parents (a proud word, my cousin)! which you could not do, were it not laid against your inclination!—Upon parents, who have laid a thousand upon you; who are set upon this point: who will not give it up: who have given up many points to you, even of this very nature: and in their turn, for the sake of their own authority, as well as judgment, expect to be obliged.

I hope I shall soon, in person, congratulate you upon this your meritorious compliance. To settle and give up my trusteeship, is one of the principal motives of my leaving these parts. I shall be glad to settle it to every one's satisfaction; to yours particularly.

If on my arrival I find a happy union, as formerly, reign in a family so dear to me, it will be an unspeakable pleasure to me; and I shall, perhaps, so dispose my affairs, as to be near you for ever.

I have written a very long letter, and will add

no more, than that I am, with the greatest respect,
my dearest cousin,

Your most affectionate and faithful servant,

WM. MORDEN.

I will suppose, my dear Miss Howe, that you have read my cousin's letter. It is now in vain to wish it had come sooner. But if it had, I might, perhaps, have been so rash as to give Mr. Lovelace the fatal meeting, as I little thought of going away with him; but I should hardly have given him the expectation of so doing, previous to the meeting, which made him come prepared; and the revocation of which he so artfully made ineffectual.

Persecuted as I was, and little expecting so much condescension, as my aunt, to my great mortification, has told me (and you confirm) I should have met with, it is, however, hard to say, what I should or should not have done as to meeting him, had it come in time: but this effect I verily believe it would have had—To have made me insist with all my might, on going over, out of all their ways, to the kind writer of the instructive letter, and on making a father (a protector, as well as a friend) of a kinsman, who is one of my trustees. This, circumstanced as I was, would have been a natural, at least an unexceptionable protection.—But I was to be unhappy! And how it cuts me to the heart

to think, that I can already subscribe to my cousin's character of a libertine, so well drawn in the letter which I suppose you now to have read!

That a man of a character, which ever was my abhorrence, should fall to my lot!—But depending on my own strength; having no reason to apprehend danger from headstrong and disgraceful impulses; I too little, perhaps, cast up my eyes to the Supreme Director: in whom, mistrusting myself, I ought to have placed my whole confidence—And the more, when I saw myself so perseveringly addressed by a man of this character.

Inexperience and presumption, with the help of a brother and sister who have low ends to answer in my disgrace, have been my ruin!—A hard word, my dear! But I repeat it upon deliberation: since, let the best happen which now can happen, my reputation is destroyed; a rake is my portion: and what that portion is, my cousin Morden's letter has acquainted you.

Pray keep it by you, till called for. I saw it not myself (having not the heart to inspect my trunks) till this morning. I would not for the world this man should see it; because it might occasion mischief between the most violent spirit, and the most settled brave one in the world, as my cousin's is said to be.

This letter was inclosed (opened) in a blank cover. Scorn and detest me as they will, I wonder that one line was not sent with it—were it but to have more particularly pointed the design of it, in the same generous spirit, that sent me the Spira.

The sealing of the cover was with black wax. I hope there is no new occasion in the family to give reason for black wax. But if there were, it would, to be sure, have been mentioned, and laid at my door—perhaps too justly!

I had begun a letter to my cousin; but laid it by, because of the uncertainty of my situation, and expecting every day for several days past to be at a greater certainty. You bid me write to him some time ago, you know. Then it was I began it: for I have great pleasure in obeying you in all I may. So I ought to have; for you are the only friend left me. And moreover, you generally honor me with your own observance of the advice I take the liberty to offer you: for I pretend to say, I give better advice than I have taken. And so I had need. For I know not how it comes about, but I am, in my own opinion, a poor lost creature: and yet cannot charge myself with one criminal or faulty inclination. Do you know, my dear, how this can be?

Yet I can tell you how, I believe—One devious step at setting out!—That must be it:—Which pursued, has led me so far out of my path, that I am in a wilderness of doubt and error; and never, never, shall find my way out of it: for, altho' but one pace awry at first, it has led me hundreds and hundreds of miles out of my path: and the poor estray has not one kind friend, nor has met with one directing passenger, to help her to recover it.

But I, presumptuous creature! must rely so much upon my own knowledge of the right path!—little

apprehending that an *ignis fatuus* with its false fires (and yet I had heard enough of such) would arise to mislead me! And now, in the midst of fens and quagmires, it plays around me, and around me, throwing me back again, whenever I think myself in the right track. But there is one common point, in which all shall meet, err widely as they may. In that I shall be laid quietly down at last: and then will all my calamities be at an end.

But how I stray again; stray from my intention! I would only have said, that I had begun a letter to my cousin Morden some time ago: but that now I can never end it. You will believe I cannot: for how shall I tell him, that all his compliments are misbestowed? That all his advice is thrown away? All his warnings vain? And that even my highest expectation is to be the wife of that free-liver, whom he so pathetically warns me to shun.

Let me, however, have your prayers joined with my own (my fate depending, as it seems, upon the lips of such a man) "That, whatever shall be my destiny, that dreadful part of my father's malediction, that I may be punished by the man in whom he supposes I put my confidence, may not take place! That this for Mr. Lovelace's own sake, and for the sake of human nature, may not be! Or, if it be necessary, in support of the parental authority, that I should be punished by him, that it may not be by his premeditated or wilful baseness; but that I may be able to acquit his intention,

if not his action!" — Otherwise, my fault will appear to be doubled in the eye of the event-judging world. And yet, methinks, I would be glad, that the unkindness of my father and uncles, whose hearts have already been too much wounded by my error, may be justified in every article, excepting in this heavy curse: and that my father will be pleased to withdraw that before it be generally known; at least that most dreadful part of it which regards futurity!

I must lay down my pen. I must brood over these reflections. Once more, before I inclose my cousin's letter, I will peruse it: and then I shall have it by heart.

LETTER VIII.

Miss CLARISSA HARLOWE, To Miss HOWE.

Sunday Night, *May 7.*

WHEN you reflect upon my unhappy situation, which is attended with so many indelicate and even shocking circumstances, some of which my pride will not let me think of with patience; all aggravated by the contents of my cousin's affecting letter; you will not wonder, that the vaporishness which has laid hold of my heart, should rise to my pen. And yet it would be more kind, more friendly in me, to conceal from you, who take such a generous interest in my concerns, that worst part of my

griefs, which communication and complaint cannot relieve.

But to whom can I unbofom myself but to you? When the man who ought to be my protector, as he has brought upon me all my distresses, adds to my apprehensions; when I have not even a fervant on whose fidelity I can rely, or to whom I can break my griefs as they arife; and when his bountiful temper and gay heart attach every one to him; and I am but a cypher, to give him fignificance, and myself pain? — These griefs, therefore, do what I can, will fometimes burft into tears, and thefe mingling with my ink, will blot my paper. And I know you will not grudge me the temporary relief.

But I fhall go on in the ftrain I left off with in my laft; when I intended rather to apologize for my melancholy. But let what I have above written, once for all, be my apology. My misfortunes have given you a call to difcharge the nobleft offices of the friendship we have vowed to each other, in advice and confolation; and it would be an injury to it, and to you, to fuppofe it needed even that call.

She then tells Mifs Howe, that now her clothes are come, Mr. Lovelace is continually teasing her to go abroad with him in a coach, attended by whom she pleafes of her own fex, either for the air, or to the public diverfions.

She gives the particulars of a converfation that has

passed between them on that subject, and his several proposals. But takes notice, that he says not the least word of the solemnity which he so much pressed for before they came to town; and which, as she observes, was necessary to give propriety to his proposals.

Now, my dear, says she, I cannot bear the life I live. I would be glad at my heart to be out of his reach. If I were, he should soon find the difference. If I must be humbled, it had better be by those to whom I owe duty, than by him. My aunt writes in her letter, that she dare not propose any thing in my favor. You tell me, that, upon inquiry, you find, that, had I not been unhappily seduced away, a change of measures was actually resolved upon; and that my mother, particularly, was determined to exert herself for the restoration of the family-peace; and, in order to succeed the better, had thoughts of trying to engage my uncle Harlowe in her party.

Let me build on these foundations. I can but try, my dear. It is my duty to try all probable methods to restore the poor outcast to favor. And who knows but that once indulgent uncle who has very great weight in the family, may be induced to interpose in my behalf? I will give up all right and title to my grandfather's devises and bequests, with all my heart and soul, to whom they please, in order to make my proposal palatable to my brother. And that my surrender may be effectual, I will engage never to marry.

What

What think you, my dear, of this expedient? Surely they cannot resolve to renounce me for ever. If they look with impartial eyes upon what has happened, they will have something to blame themselves for, as well as me.

I presume that you will be of opinion, that this expedient is worth trying. But here is my difficulty: if I should write, my hard-hearted brother has so strongly confederated them all against me, that my letter would be handed about from one to another, till he had hardened every one to refuse my request; whereas, could my uncle be engaged to espouse my cause, as from himself, I should have some hope; as I presume to think he would soon have my mother and my aunt of his party.

What, therefore, I am thinking of, is this —
“ Suppose Mr. Hickman, whose good character has gained him every body’s respect, should put himself in my uncle Harlowe’s way? And (as if from your knowledge of the state of things between Mr. Lovelace and me) assure him not only of the above particulars, but that I am under no obligations that shall hinder me from taking his directions? ”

I submit the whole to your discretion, whether to pursue it at all, or in what manner. But if it be pursued, and if my uncle refuses to interest himself in my favor upon Mr. Hickman’s application as from you (for so, for obvious reasons, it must be put) I can then have no hope; and my next step, in the mind I am in, shall be to throw myself into the protection of the Ladies of his family.

It were an impiety to adopt the following lines,
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D

because it would be throwing upon the decrees of Providence a fault too much my own. But often do I revolve them, for the sake of the general similitude which they bear to my unhappy, yet undesigned error.

To you, great gods! I make my last appeal:
Or clear my virtues, or my crimes reveal.
If wand'ring in the maze of life I run,
And backward tread the steps I fought to shun,
Impute my error to your own decree:
My feet are guilty; but my heart is free.

The Lady dates again on Monday, to let Miss Howe know, that Mr. Lovelace, on observing her uneasiness, had introduced to her Mr. Mennell, Mrs. Fetchville's kinsman, who managed all her affairs. She calls him a young officer of sense and politeness, who gave her an account of the house and furniture, to the same effect that Mr. Lovelace had done before; as also of the melancholy way Mrs. Fetchville is in.

She tells Miss Howe, how extremely urgent Mr. Lovelace was with the gentleman, to get his spouse (as he now always calls her before company) a sight of the house. And that Mr. Mennell undertook that very afternoon to show her all of it, except the apartment Mrs. Fetchville should be in when she went. But that she chose not to take another step till she knew how she approved of her scheme to have her uncle founded; and with what success, if tried, it would be attended.

Mr. Lovelace in his humorous way, gives his friend an account of the Lady's peevishness and dejection, on receiving a letter with her clothes. He regrets that he has lost her confidence; which he attributes to his bringing her into the company of his four companions. Yet he thinks he must excuse them, and censure her for over-niceness; for that he never saw men behave better, at least not them.

Mentioning his introducing Mr. Mennell to her,

Now, Jack, says he, was it not very kind of Mr. Mennell (captain Mennell I sometimes called him; for among the military men there is no such officer, thou knowest, as a lieutenant, or an ensign)—was it not very kind in him to come along with me so readily as he did, to satisfy my beloved about the vaporish Lady and the house?

But who is captain Mennell? methinks thou askest: I never heard of such a man as captain Mennell.

Very likely. But knowest thou not young Newcomb, honest Doleman's nephew?

O-ho! Is it he?

It is. And I have changed his name by virtue of my own single authority. Knowest thou not, that I am a great name-father? Preferments I bestow, both military and civil. I give estates, and take them away at my pleasure. Quality too I create. And by a still more valuable prerogative, I degrade by virtue of my own imperial will, without any

other act of forfeiture than for my own convenience. What a poor thing is a monarch to me!

But Mennell, now he has seen this angel of a woman, has qualms; that's the devil! — I shall have enough to do to keep him right. But it is the less wonder, that he should stagger, when a few hours conversation with the same Lady could make four much more hardened varlets find hearts. — Only, that I am confident, that I shall at last reward her virtue, if her virtue overcome me, or I should find it impossible to persevere — For at times, I have confounded qualms myself. But say not a word of them to the confraternity: nor laugh at me for them thyself.

In another letter, dated Monday night, he writes as follows:

This perverse Lady keeps me at such distance, that I am sure something is going on between her and Miss Howe, notwithstanding the prohibition from Mrs. Howe to both: and as I have thought it some degree of merit in myself to punish others for their transgressions, I am of opinion, that both these girls are punishable for their breach of parental injunctions. And as to their letter carrier, I have been inquiring into his way of living; and finding him to be a common poacher, a deer-stealer, and warren-robber, who, under pretence of higgling, deals with a set of customers, who constantly take all he brings, whether fish, fowl, or venison, I hold myself justified (since Wilson's conveyance

must at present be sacred) to have him stript and robbed, and what money he has about him given to the poor; since, if I take not money as well as letters, I shall be suspected.

To serve one's self, and punish a villain, at the same time, is serving public and private. The law was not made for such a man as me. And I must come at correspondencies so disobediently carried on.

But, on second thoughts, if I could find out that the dear creature carried any of her letters in her pockets, I can get her to a play or to a concert, and she may have the misfortune to lose her pockets.

But how shall I find this out; since her Dorcas knows no more of her dressing or undressing than her Lovelace? For she is dressed for the day, before she appears even to her servant. Vilely suspicious! Upon my soul, Jack, a suspicious temper is a punishable temper. If a woman suspects a rogue in an honest man, is it not enough to make the honest man who knows it, a rogue?

But as to her pockets, I think my mind hankers after them, as the less mischievous attempt. But they cannot hold all the letters that I should wish to see. And yet a woman's pockets are half as deep as she is high. Tied round the sweet Levities, I presume, as ballast-bags, lest the wind, as they move with full sail, from whale-ribbed canvas, should blow away the gypsies.

He then, in apprehension that something is meditating between the two Ladies, or that something

may be set on foot to get Miss Harlowe out of his hands, relates several of his contrivances, and boasts of his instructions given in writing to Dorcas and to his servant Will. Summers; and says, that he has provided against every possible accident, even to bring her back if she should escape, or in case she should go abroad, and then refuse to return; and hopes so to manage, as that, should he make an attempt, whether he succeed in it, or not, he may have a pretence to detain her.

He then proceeds as follows :

I have ordered Dorcas to cultivate by all means her Lady's favor; to lament her incapacity as to writing and reading; to show letters to her Lady, as from pretended country relations; to beg her advice how to answer them, and to get them answered; and to be always aiming at scrawling with a pen, lest inky fingers should give suspicion. I have moreover given the wench an ivory-leaved pocket book, with a silver pencil, that she may make memoranda on occasion.

And let me tell thee, that the Lady has already (at Mrs. Sinclair's motion) removed her clothes out of the trunks they came in, into an ample mahogany repository, where they will lie at full length, and which has drawers in it for linen. — A repository, that used to hold the richest suits which some of the nymphs put on, when they are to be dressed out, to captivate, or to ape quality. For many a countess, thou knowest, has our mother equipped;

may, two or three dutchesses, who live upon quality-terms with their Lords. But this to such as will come up to her price, and can make an appearance like quality themselves on the occasion: for the reputation of persons of birth must not lie at the mercy of every underdegreed sinner.

A master-key which will open every lock in this chest, is put into Dorcas's hands; and she is to take care, when she searches for papers, before she removes any thing, to observe how it lies, that she may replace all to a hair. Sally and Polly can occasionally help to transcribe. Slow and sure with such an Argus-eyed charmer must be all my movements.

It is impossible that one so young and so inexperienced as she is, can have all her caution from herself; the behaviour of the women so unexceptionable; no revellings, no company ever admitted into this inner-house; all genteel, quiet, and easy, in it; the nymphs well bred, and well read; her first disgusts to the old one got over—It must be Miss Howe, therefore (who once was in danger of being taken in by one of our class, by honest Sir George Colmar, as thou hast heard) that makes my progress difficult.

Thou seest, Belford by the above precautionaries, that I forget nothing. As the song says, it is not to be imagined

On what slight strings

Depend those things,

On which men build their glory!

So far, so good. I shall never rest till I have discovered in the first place, where the dear creature puts her letters; and in the next till I have got her to a play, to a concert, or to take an airing with me out of town for a day or two.

* * *

I gave thee just now some of my contrivances. Dorcas, who is ever attentive to all her Lady's motions, has given me some instances of her mistress's precautions. She wafers her letters, it seems, in two places, pricks the wafers, and then seals upon them. No doubt but the same care is taken with regard to those brought her; for she always examines the seals of the latter before she opens them.

I must, I must come at them. This difficulty augments my curiosity. Strange, so much as she writes, and at all hours, that not one sleepy or forgetful moment has offered in our favor!

A fair contention, thou seest: nor plead thou in her favor her youth, her beauty, her family, her fortune. Credulity, she has none; and with regard to her tender years, am I not a young fellow myself? As to beauty, pr'ythee, Jack, do thou, to save my modesty, make a comparison between my Clarissa for a woman, and thy Lovelace for a man. For her family, that was not known to its country a century ago: and I hate them all but her. Have I not cause?—For her fortune; fortune, thou knowest, was ever a stimulus with me, and this for reasons not ignoble. Do not girls of fortune adorn themselves on purpose to engage our attention? Seek they not to draw us into their snares?

Depend they not, generally, on their fortunes, in the views they have upon us, more than on their merits? Shall we deprive them of the benefit of their principal dependence?—Can I, in particular, marry every girl who wishes to obtain my notice? If, therefore, in support of the libertine principles for which none of the sweet rogues hate us, a woman of fortune is brought to yield homage to her emperor, and any consequences attend the subjugation, is not such a one shielded by her fortune, as well from insult and contempt, as from indigence?—All, then, that admits of debate between my beloved and me, is only this—Which of the two has more wit, more circumspection—And that remains to be tried.

A sad life, however, this life of doubt and suspense, for the poor Lady, to live, as well as for me; that is to say, if she be not naturally jealous—If she be, her uneasiness is constitutional, and she cannot help it, nor will it, in that case, hurt her. For a suspicious temper will make occasions for doubt, if none were to offer to its hand. My fair one, therefore, if naturally suspicious, is obliged to me for saving her the trouble of studying for these occasions—But after all, the plainest paths in our journeys through life are the safest and best I believe, altho' it is not given me to chuse them. I am not, however, singular in the pursuit of the more intricate paths; since there are thousands and ten thousand, who had rather fish in troubled water than in smooth.

LETTER IX.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

Tuesday, *May 9.*

I AM a very unhappy man. This Lady is said to be one of the sweetest tempered creatures in the world: and so I thought her. But to me, she is one of the most perverse. I never was supposed to be an ill-natured mortal neither. How can it be? I imagined for a long while, that we were born to make each other happy: but, quite the contrary; we really seem to be sent to plague each other.

I will write a comedy, I think. I have a title ready; and that's half the work. The Quarrellsome Lovers. 'Twill do. There's something new and striking in it. Yet, more or less, all lovers quarrel. Old Terence has taken notice of that; and observes upon it, That lovers' falling-out occasions lovers' falling-in; and a better understanding of course. 'Tis natural that it should be so. But with us, we fall out so often, without falling-in once; and a second quarrel so generally happens before a first is made up; that it is hard to guess what event our loves will be attended with. But perseverance is my glory, and patience my handmaid, when I have in view an object worthy of my attempts. What is there in an easy conquest? Hudibras questions well,

— What mad lover ever dy'd
To gain a soft and easy bride?
Or, for a Lady tender-hearted,
In purling streams, or hemp, departed?

But I will lead to the occasion of this preamble. I had been out. On my return, meeting Dorcas on the stairs—Your Lady in her chamber, Dorcas? In the diningroom, Sir: and if ever you hope for an opportunity to come at a letter, it must be now. For at her feet I saw one lie, which, as may be seen by its open folds, she has been reading, with a little parcel of others she is now busied with—All pulled out of her pocket, as I believe: so, Sir, you'll know where to find them another time.

I was ready to leap for joy, and instantly resolved to bring forward an expedient which I had held in petto; and entering into the diningroom, with an air of transport, I boldly clasped my arms about her, as she sat; she huddling up her papers in her handkerchief all the time; the dropt paper unseen. O my dearest life, a lucky expedient have Mr. Menzell and I hit upon, just now. In order to hasten Mrs. Fetchville to quit the house, I have agreed, if you approve of it, to entertain her cook, her housemaid, and two men servants (about whom she was very solicitous) till you are provided to your mind. And that no accommodations may be wanted, I have consented to take the household linen at an appraisement.

I am to pay down five hundred pounds, and the remainder as soon as the bills can be looked up,

and the amount of them adjusted. Thus will you have a charming house entirely ready to receive you. Some of the Ladies of my family will soon be with you: they will not permit you long to suspend my happy day. And that nothing may be wanting to gratify your utmost punctilio, I will till then consent to stay here at Mrs. Sinclair's, while you reside at your new house; and leave the rest to your own generosity. O my beloved creature, will not this be agreeable to you? — I am sure it will — It must — And clasping her closer to me, I gave her a more fervent kiss than ever I had dared to give her before. I permitted not my ardor to overcome my discretion however; for I took care to set my foot upon the letter, and scraped it farther from her, as it were behind her chair.

She was in a passion at the liberty I took. Bowing low, I begged her pardon; and stooping still lower, in the same motion, took up the letter, and whipt it into my bosom.

Pox on me, for a puppy, a fool, a blockhead, a clumsy varlet, a mere Jack Belford! — I thought myself a much cleverer fellow than I am! — Why could I not have been followed in by Dorcas; who might have taken it up, while I addressed her Lady?

For here, the letter being unfolded, I could not put it into my bosom, without alarming her ears, as my sudden motion did her eyes. — Up she flew in a moment: Traitor! Judas! her eyes flashing lightning, and a perturbation in her eager countenance, so charming! — What have you taken up?

—And then, what for both my ears I durst not to have done to her, she made no scruple to seize the stolen letter, though in my bosom.

What was to be done on so palpable a detection? —I clasped her hand, which had hold of the ravished paper, between mine: O my beloved creature! said I, can you think I have not some curiosity? Is it possible you can be thus for ever employed; and I, loving narrative letter-writing above every other species of writing, and admiring your talent that way, should not (thus upon the dawn of my happiness, as I presume to hope) burn with a desire to be admitted into so sweet a correspondence?

Let go my hand! — stamping with her pretty foot: How dare you, Sir! — At this rate, I see — too plainly I see — And more she could not say: but gasping, was ready to faint with passion and affright; the devil a bit of her accustomed gentleness to be seen in her charming face, or to be heard in her musical voice.

Having gone thus far, loth, very loth was I to lose my prize — Once more I got hold of the rumpled up letter! — Impudent man! were her words: stamping again. For God's sake, then it was. I let go my prize, lest she should faint away: but had the pleasure to find my hand between both hers; she trying to open my reluctant fingers. How near was my heart at that moment to my hand, throbbing to my fingers ends, to be thus familiarly, although angrily, treated by the charmer of my soul!

When she had got it in her possession, she flew

to the door. I threw myself in her way, shut it, and, in the humblest manner, besought her to forgive me. And do you think the Harlowe-hearted charmer (notwithstanding the agreeable annunciation I came in with) would forgive me? — No truly; but pushing me rudely from the door, as if I had been nothing (yet do I love to try, thus innocently to try, her strength too!) she gaining that force through passion, which I had lost through fear, out she shot to her own apartment (thank my stars she could fly no further); and as soon as she entered it, in a passion still, she double-locked and double-bolted herself in. This my comfort, on reflection, that, upon a greater offence, it cannot be worse.

I retreated to my own apartment, with my heart full: and, my man Will. not being near me, gave myself a plaguy knock on the forehead, with my double fist.

And now is my charmer shut up from me: refusing to see me; refusing her meals. She resolves not to see me; that's more: — Never again, if she can help it; and in the mind she is in — I hope she has said.

The dear creatures, whenever they quarrel with their humble servants, should always remember this saving clause, that they may not be forsworn.

But thinkest thou that I will not make it the subject of one of my first plots, to inform myself of the reason why all this commotion was necessary on so slight an occasion as this would have been, were not the letters that pass between these Ladies of a treasonable nature?

Wednesday Morning.

No admiffion to breakfast, any more than to fupper. I wifh this Lady is not a fimpleton, after all.

I have fent up in captain Mennell's name.

A meffage from captain Mennell, Madam.

It won't do. She is of baby age. She cannot be—a Solomon, I was going to fay, in every thing. Solomon, Jack, was the wifeft man. But didft ever hear who was the wifeft woman? I want a comparifon for this Lady. Cunning women and witches we read of without number. But I fancy wifdom never entered into the character of a woman. It is not a requifite of the fex. Women, indeed, make better fovereigns than men: but why is that? — Because the women-sovereigns are governed by men; the men-sovereigns by women. Charming by my foul! For hence we guefs at the rudder by which both are fteered.

But to put wifdom out of the queftion, and to take cunning in, that is to fay, to confider woman as a woman; what fhall we do, if this Lady has fomething extraordinary in her head? Repeated charges has fhe given to Wilfon, by a particular meffenger, to fend any letter directed for her the moment it comes.

I muft keep a good look out. She is not now afraid of her brother's plot. I fhant be at all furprifed, if Singleton calls upon Mifs Howe, as the only perfon who knows, or is likely to know, where

Miss Harlowe is; pretending to have affairs of importance, and of particular service to her, if he can but be admitted to her speech — Of compromise, who knows, from her brother?

Then will Miss Howe warn her to keep close. Then will my protection be again necessary. This will do, I believe. Any thing from Miss Howe must.

Joseph Leman is a vile fellow with her, and my implement. Joseph, honest Joseph, as I call him, may hang himself. I have played him off enough, and have very little further use for him. No need to wear one plot to the stumps, when I can find new ones every hour.

Nor blame me for the use I make of my talents. Who, that has such, will let 'em be idle?

Well then, I will find a Singleton; that's all I have to do.

Instantly find one! — Will! —

Sir —

This moment call me hither thy cousin Paul Wheatly, just come from sea, whom thou wert recommending to my service, if I were to marry, and keep a pleasure-boat.

Presto — Will is gone — Paul will be here presently. Presently will he be gone to Mrs. Howe's. If Paul be Singleton's mate, coming from his captain it will do as well as if it were Singleton himself.

Sally, a little devil, often reproaches me with the slowness of my proceedings. But in a play, does not the principal entertainment lie in the first four acts?

Is

Is not all in a manner over when you come to the fifth? And what a vulture of a man must he be, who souses upon his prey, and in the same moment trusses and devours?

But to own the truth, I have over-plotted myself. To make my work secure, as I thought, I have frightened the dear creature with the sight of my four Hottentots, and I shall be a long time, I doubt, before I can recover my lost ground. And then this cursed family at Harlowe-place have made her out of humor with me, with herself, and with all the world, but Miss Howe, who, no doubt, is continually adding difficulties to my other difficulties.

I am very unwilling to have recourse to measures which these demons below are continually urging me to take; because I am sure, that, at last, I shall be brought to make her legally mine.

One complete trial over, and I think I will do her noble justice.

* * *

Well, Paul's gone — gone already — Has all his lessons. A notable fellow! — Lord W.'s necessary man was Paul before he went to sea. A more sensible rogue Paul than Joseph! Not such a pretender to piety neither, as the other. At what a price have I bought that Joseph! I believe I must punish the rascal at last: but must let him marry first: then (though that may be punishment enough) I shall punish two at once in the man and his wife. And how richly does Betty deserve punishment for her behaviour to my goddess?

But now I hear the rusty hinges of my beloved's door give me creaking invitation. My heart creaks and throbs with respondent trepidations: whimsical enough though! For what relation has a lover's heart to a rusty pair of hinges? But they are the hinges that open and shut the door of my beloved's bed-chamber. Relation enough in that.

I hear not the door shut again. I shall receive her commands I hope anon. What signifies her keeping me thus at distance? She must be mine, let me do or offer what I will. Courage whenever I assume, all is over: for should she think of escaping from hence, whither can she fly to avoid me? Her parents will not receive her. Her uncles will not entertain her. Her beloved Norton is in their direction, and cannot. Miss Howe dare not. She has not one friend in town but me.—Is entirely a stranger to the town. And what then is the matter with me, that I should be thus unaccountably overawed and tyrannized over by a dear creature who wants only to know how impossible it is that she should escape me, in order to be as humble to me, as she is to her persecuting relations!

Should I even make the grand attempt, and fail, and should she hate me for it, her hatred can be but temporary. She has already incurred the censure of the world. She must, therefore, chuse to be mine, for the sake of folding up her reputation in the eye of that impudent world. For, who that knows me, and knows that she has been in my power, though but for twenty-four hours, will think her spotless as to fact, let her inclination be

what it will? And then human nature is such a well known rogue, that every man and woman judges by what each knows of him or herself, that inclination is no more to be trusted, where an opportunity is given, than I am; especially where a woman young and blooming loves a man well enough to go off with him; for such will be the world's construction in the present case.

She calls her maid Dorcas. No doubt, that I may hear her harmonious voice, and to give me an opportunity to pour out my soul at her feet; to renew all my vows; and to receive her pardon for the past offence: and then, with what pleasure shall I begin upon a new score; and afterwards wipe out that; and begin another, and another; till the last offence passes; and there can be no other! And once, after that, to be forgiven, will be to be forgiven for ever.

* * *

The door is again shut. Dorcas tells me, that her Lady denies to admit me to dine with her; a favor I had ordered the wench to beseech her to grant me, the next time she saw her — Not uncivilly, however, denies — Coming to by degrees! Nothing but the last offence, the honest wench tells me, in the language of her principals below, will do with her. The last offence is meditating. Yet this vile recreant heart of mine plays me booty.

But here I conclude; though the tyranness leaves me nothing to do, but to read, write, and fret.

Subscription is formal between us. Besides, I am so totally hers, that I cannot say how much I am thine or any other person's.

LETTER X.

Miss CLARISSA HARLOWE, To Miss HOWE.

Tuesday, *May 9.*

IF, my dear, you approve of the application to my uncle Harlowe, I wish it may be made as soon as possible. We are quite out again. I have shut myself up from him. The offence indeed not very great—And yet it is too. He had like to have got a letter. One of yours. But never will I write again, or reperuse my papers, in an apartment where he thinks himself entitled to come. He did not read a line of it. Indeed he did not. So don't be uneasy. And depend upon future caution.

Thus it was. The sun being upon my closet, and Mr. Lovelace abroad —

She then gives Miss Howe an account of his coming in by surprise upon her: of his fluttering speech: of his bold address: of her struggle with him for the letter, &c.

And now, my dear, proceeds she, I am more and more convinced, that I am too much in his power to make it prudent to stay with him. And

if my friends will but give me hope, I will resolve to abandon him for ever.

O my dear! he is a fierce, a foolish, an insolent creature!—And in truth, I hardly expect, that we can accommodate. How much unhappier am I already with him, than my mother ever was with my father after marriage! Since (and that without any reason, any pretence in the world for it) he is for breaking my spirit before I am his; and while I am, or ought to be (O my folly, that I am not!) in my own power.

Till I know whether my friends will give me hope or not, I must do what I never studied to do before in any case; that is, try to keep this difference open: and yet it will make me look little in my own eyes; because I shall mean by it more than I can own. But this is one of the consequences of a step I shall ever deplore! The natural fruits of all engagements where the minds are unpaired—dispaired, in my case may I say.

Let this evermore be my caution to individuals of my sex—Guard your eye: 'twill ever be in a combination against your judgment. If there are two parts to be taken, it will for ever, traitor as it is, take the wrong one.

If you ask me, my dear, How this caution befits me? let me tell you a secret which I have but very lately found out upon self-examination, altho' you seem to have made the discovery long ago: That had not my foolish eye been too much attached, I had not taken the pains to attempt, so officiously as I did, the prevention of mischief between him

and some of my family, which first induced the correspondence between us, and was the occasion of bringing the apprehended mischief with double weight upon myself. My vanity and conceit, as far as I know, might have part in the inconsiderate measure: for does it not look as if I thought myself more capable of obviating difficulties, than any body else of my family?

But you must not, my dear, suppose my heart to be still a confederate with my eye. That deluded eye now clearly sees its fault, and the misled heart despises it for it. Hence the application I am making to my uncle: hence it is, that I can say (I think truly) that I would atone for my fault at any rate, even by the sacrifice of a limb or two, if that would do.

Adieu, my dearest friend! — May your heart never know the hundredth part of the pain mine at present feels! prays

Your

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER XI.

Miss HOWE, To Miss CLARISSA HARLOWE.

Wednesday, *May* 10.

I WILL write! No man shall write for me. No woman shall hinder me from writing. Surely I am of age to distinguish between reason and caprice. I am not writing to a man, am I?—If I were carrying on a correspondence with a fellow, of whom my mother disapproved, and whom it might be improper for me to encourage, my own honor and my duty would engage my obedience. But as the case is so widely different, not a word more on this subject, I beseech you!

I much approve of your resolution to leave this wretch, if you can make up with your uncle.

I hate the man—most heartily do I hate him, for his teasing ways. The very reading of your account of them teases me almost as much as they can you. May you have encouragement to fly the foolish wretch!

I have other reasons to wish you may: for I have just made an acquaintance with one who knows a vast deal of his private history. The man is really a villain, my dear! an execrable one! if all be true that I have heard: and yet I am promised other particulars. I do assure you, my dear friend, that had he a dozen lives, he might have forfeited them all, and been dead twenty crimes ago.

If ever you condescend to talk familiarly with him again, ask him after Miss Betterton, and what became of her: and if he shuffle and prevaricate as to her, question him about Miss Lockyer. — O my dear, the man's a villain!

I will have your uncle founded, as you desire, and that out of hand. But yet I am afraid of the success; and this for several reasons. 'Tis hard to say what the sacrifice of your estate would do with some people: and yet I must not, when it comes to the test, permit you to make it.

As your Hannah continues ill, I would advise you to try to attach Dorcas to your interest. Have you not been impolitically shy of her?

I wish you could come at some of his letters. Surely a man of his negligent character cannot be always guarded. If he be, and if you cannot engage your servant, I shall suspect them both. Let him be called upon at a short warning when he is writing, or when he has papers lying about, and so surprise him into negligence.

Such inquiries, I know, are of the same nature with those we make at an inn in travelling, when we look into every corner and closet for fear of a villain; yet should be frightened out of our wits, were we to find one. But 'tis better to detect such a one when awake and up, than to be attacked by him when in bed and asleep.

I am glad you have your clothes. But no money! No books, but a Spira, a Drexelius, and a Practice of Piety! Those who sent the latter, ought to have

kept it for themselves. — But I must hurry myself from this subject.

You have exceedingly alarmed me by what you hint of his attempt to get one of my letters. I am assured by my new informant, that he is the head of a gang of wretches (those he brought you among, no doubt, were some of them) who join together to betray innocent creatures, and to support one another afterwards by violence; and were he to come at the knowledge of the freedoms I take with him, I should be afraid to stir out without a guard.

I am sorry to tell you, that I have reason to think, that your brother has not laid aside his foolish plot. A sun-burnt, sailor-looking fellow was with me just now, pretending great service to you from captain Singleton, could he be admitted to your speech. I pleaded ignorance, as to the place of your abode. The fellow was too well instructed for me to get any thing out of him.

I wept for two hours incessantly on reading yours which inclosed that from your cousin Morden. My dearest creature, do not desert yourself. Let your Anna Howe obey the call of that friendship which has united us as one soul, and endeavour to give you consolation.

I wonder not at the melancholy reflections you so often cast upon yourself in your letters, for the step you have been forced upon, on the one hand, and tricked into on the other. A strange fatality! As if it were designed to show the vanity of all human prudence. I wish, my dear, as you hint,

that both you and I have not too much prided ourselves in a perhaps too conscious superiority over others. But I will stop—How apt are weak minds to look out for judgments in any extraordinary event! 'Tis so far right, that it is better, and safer, and juster, to arraign ourselves, or our dearest friends, than Providence; which must always have wise ends to answer in its dispensations.

But do not talk, as in one of your former, of being a warning only—You will be as excellent an example, as you ever hoped to be, as well as a warning: and that will make your story, to all that shall come to know it, of double efficacy: for were it that such a merit as yours could not ensure to herself noble and generous usage from a libertine heart, who will expect any tolerable behaviour from men of his character?

If you think yourself inexcusable for taking a step that put you into the way of delusion, without any intention to go off with him, what must those giddy creatures think of themselves, who, without half your provocations and inducements, and without any regard to decorum, leap walls, drop from windows, and steal away from their parents' house, to the seducer's bed, in the same day?

Again, if you are so ready to accuse yourself for dispensing with the prohibitions of the most unreasonable parents, which yet were but half-prohibitions at first, what ought those to do, who wilfully shut their ears to the advice of the most reasonable; and that, perhaps, where apparent ruin, or undoubted

inconvenience, is the consequence of their predetermined rashness?

And, lastly, to all who will know your story, you will be an excellent example of watchfulness, and of that caution and reserve by which a prudent person, who has been supposed to be a little misled, endeavours to mend her error; and, never once losing sight of her duty, does all in her power to recover the path she has been rather driven out of, than chosen to swerve from.

Come, come, my dearest friend, consider but these things; and steadily, without desponding, pursue your earnest purposes to amend what you think has been amiss; and it may not be a misfortune in the end, that you have erred; especially as so little of your will was in your error.

And, indeed, I must say, that I use the words Misled, and Error, and such-like, only in compliment to your own too ready self-accusations, and to the opinion of one to whom I owe duty: for I think in my conscience, that every part of your conduct is defensible; and that those only are blameable who have no other way to clear themselves but by condemning you.

I expect, however, that such melancholy reflections as drop from your pen but too often, will mingle with all your future pleasures, were you to marry Lovelace, and were he to make the best of husbands.

You was immensely happy, above the happiness of a mortal creature, before you knew him: every body almost worshipped you: envy itself, which has

of late reared up its venomous head against you, was awed by your superior worthiness, into silence and admiration. You was the soul of every company where you visited. Your elders have I seen declining to offer their opinions upon a subject till you had delivered yours; often to save themselves the mortification of retracting theirs, when they heard yours. Yet in all this, your sweetness of manners, your humility and affability, caused the subscription every one made to your sentiments, and to your superiority, to be equally unfeigned and unhesitating; for they saw that their applause, and the preference they gave you to themselves, subjected not themselves to insults, nor exalted you into any visible triumph over them; for you had always something to say on every point you carried, that raised the yielding heart, and left every one pleased and satisfied with themselves, though they carried not off the palm.

Your works were shown or referred to wherever fine works were talked of. Nobody had any but an inferior and second hand praise for diligence, for oeconomy, for reading, for writing, for memory, for facility in learning every thing laudable, and even for the more envied graces of person and dress, and an all-surpassing elegance in both, where you were known, and those subjects talked of.

The poor blessed you every step you trod: the rich thought you their honor, and took a pride that they were not obliged to descend from their own class for an example that did credit to it.

Though all men wished for you, and fought you, young as you were; yet, had not those who were brought to address you, been encouraged out of fordid and spiteful views, not one of them would have dared to lift up his eyes to you.

Thus happy in all about you, thus making happy all within your circle, could you think that nothing would happen to you, to convince you, that you were not to be exempted from the common lot? — To convince you, that you were not absolutely perfect; and that you must not expect to pass through life without trial, temptation, and misfortune?

Indeed it must be owned that no trial, no temptation, worthy of your virtue, and of your prudence, could well have attacked you sooner, because of your tender years, nor more effectually, than those heavy ones, under which you struggle; since it must be allowed, that your equanimity and foresight made you superior to common accidents; for are not most of the troubles that fall to the lots of common mortals brought upon themselves either by their too large desires, or too little deserts? — Cases, both, from which you stood exempt. — It was, therefore, to be some man, or some worse spirit in the shape of one, that, formed on purpose, was to be sent to invade you; while as many other such spirits as there are persons in your family, were permitted to take possession, severally in one dark hour, of the heart of every one of it, there to sit perching, perhaps, and directing every

motion to the motions of the seducer without, in order to irritate, to provoke, to push you forward to meet him.

Upon the whole, there seems, as I have often said, to have been a kind of fate in your error, if it were an error; and this perhaps admitted for the sake of a better example to be collected from your sufferings, than could have been given, had you never erred: for, my dear, the time of adversity is your shining time. I see evidently, that adversity must call forth graces and beauties which could not have been brought to light in a run of that prosperous fortune which attended you from your cradle till now; admirably as you became, and, as we all thought, greatly as you deserved that prosperity.

All the matter is, the trial must be grievous to you. It is to me: it is to all who love you, and looked upon you as one set aloft to be admired and imitated, and not as a mark, as you have lately found, for envy to shoot its shafts at.

Let what I have written above have its due weight with you, my dear, and then, as warm imaginations are not without a mixture of enthusiasm, your Anna Howe, who, on refusal of it, imagines it to be in a style superior to her usual style, will be ready to flatter herself that she has been in a manner inspired with the hints that have comforted and raised the dejected heart of her suffering friend; who, from such hard trials, in a bloom so tender, may find at times her spirits sunk too low to enable her to

pervade the furrounding darknefs, which conceals from her the hopeful dawning of the better day which awaits her.

I will add no more at present, than that I am

Your ever faithful and affectionate,

ANNA HOWE.

LETTER XII.

Miss CLARISSA HARLOWE, To Miss HOWE.

Friday *May* 12.

I MUST be silent, my exalted friend, under praises that oppress my heart with a consciousness of not deserving them; at the same time that the generous design of those praises raises and comforts it: for it is a charming thing to stand high in the opinion of those we love; and to find that there are souls that can carry their friendships beyond accidents, beyond body, and ties of blood. Whatever, my dearest creature, is my shining time, the time of a friend's adversity is yours. And it would be almost a fault in me to regret those afflictions, which give you an opportunity so gloriously to exert those qualities, which not only ennoble our sex, but dignify human nature.

But let me proceed to subjects less agreeable.

I am sorry you have reason to think Singleton's

projects are not at an end. But who knows what the sailor had to propose?—Yet had any good been intended me, this method would hardly have been fallen upon.

Depend upon it, my dear, your letters shall be safe.

I have made a handle of Mr. Lovelace's bold attempt and freedom, as I told you I would, to keep him ever since at distance, that I may have an opportunity to see the success of my application to my uncle, and to be at liberty to embrace any favorable overtures that may arise from it. Yet he has been very importunate, and twice brought Mr. Mennell from Mrs. Fetchville to talk about the house.—If I should be obliged to make up with him again, I shall think I am always doing myself a spite.

As to what you mention of his newly detected crimes; and your advice to attach Dorcas to my interest; and to come at some of his letters; these things will require more or less of my attention, as I may hope favor or not from my uncle Harlowe.

I am sorry that my poor Hannah continues ill. Pray, my dear, inform yourself, and let me know, whether she wants any thing that befits her case.

I will not close this letter till to morrow is over; for I am resolved to go to church; and this as well for the sake of my duty, as to see, if I am at liberty to go out when I please without being attended or accompanied.

Sunday

Sunday, *May 14.*

I have not been able to avoid a short debate with Mr. Lovelace. I had ordered a coach to the door. When I had notice that it was come, I went out of my chamber to go to it; but met him dressed on the stairs-head with a book in his hand, but without his hat and sword. He asked with an air very solemn, yet respectful, if I were going abroad. I told him I was. He desired leave to attend me, if I were going to church. I refused him. And then he complained heavily of my treatment of him; and declared that he would not live such another week as the past, for the world.

I owned to him very frankly, that I had made an application to my friends, and that I was resolved to keep myself to myself till I knew the issue of it.

He colored, and seemed surpris'd. But checking himself in something he was going to say, he pleaded my danger from Singleton, and again desired to attend me.

And then he told me, that Mrs. Fetchville had desired to continue a fortnight longer in the house. She found, said he, that I was unable to determine about entering upon it; and now who knows when such a vaporish creature will come to a resolution? This, Madam, has been an unhappy week; for had I not stood upon such bad terms with you, you might have been now mistress of that house; and

probably had my cousin Montague, if not Lady Betty, actually with you.

And so, Sir, taking all you say for granted, your cousin Montague cannot come to Mrs. Sinclair's? What, pray, is her objection to Mrs. Sinclair's? Is this house fit for me to live in a month or two, and not fit for any of your relations for a few days? — And Mrs. Fetchville has taken more time too! — Then, pushing by him, I hurried down stairs.

He called to Dorcas to bring him his sword and hat; and following me down into the passage, placed himself between me and the door; and again desired leave to attend me.

Mrs. Sinclair came out at that instant, and asked me, if I did not chuse a dish of chocolate?

I wish, Mrs. Sinclair, said I, you would take this man in with you to your chocolate. I don't know whether I am at liberty to stir out without his leave or not.

Then turning to him, I asked, If he kept me there his prisoner?

Dorcas just then bringing him his sword and hat, he opened the street-door, and taking my reluctant hand, led me, in a very obsequious manner, to the coach. People passing by, stopt, stared, and whispered — But he is so graceful in his person and dress, that he generally takes every eye.

I was uneasy to be so gazed at; and he stepped in after me, and the coachman drove to St. Paul's.

He was very full of assiduities all the way; while I was as reserved as possible: and when I returned,

dined, as I had done the greatest part of the week, by myself.

He told me, upon my resolving to do so, that altho' he would continue his passive observance till I knew the issue of my application; yet I must expect that then I should not rest one moment till I had fixed his happy day: for that his very soul was fretted with my flights, resentments, and delays.

A wretch! when I can say, to my infinite regret, on a double account, that all he complains of is owing to himself!

O that I may have good tidings from my uncle!

Adieu, my dearest friend! — This shall lie ready for an exchange (as I hope for one to morrow from you) that will decide, as I may say, the destiny of

Your

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER XIII.

Miss HOWE, To Mrs. JUDITH NORTON.

Thursday, *May* 11.

Good Mrs. Norton,

CANNOT you, without naming me as an adviser, who am hated by the family, contrive a way to let Mrs. Harlowe know, that in an accidental conversation with me, you had been assured, that my beloved friend pines after a reconciliation with her relations? That she has hitherto, in hopes of it, refused to enter into any obligation that shall be in the least a hindrance to it: that she would fain avoid giving Mr. Lovelace a right to make her family uneasy in relation to her grandfather's estate: that all she wishes for still, is to be indulged in her choice of a single life, and, on that condition, would make her father's pleasure hers with regard to that estate: that Mr. Lovelace is continually pressing her to marry him; and all his friends likewise: but that I am sure, she has so little liking to the man, because of his faulty morals, and of the antipathy of her relations to him, that if she had any hope given her of reconciliation, she would forego all thoughts of him, and put herself into her father's protection. But that their resolution must be speedy; for otherwise she would find herself obliged to give way to his pressing entreaties; and it might

then be out of her power to prevent disagreeable litigations.

I do assure you, Mrs. Norton, upon my honor, that our dearest friend knows nothing of this procedure of mine: and, therefore, it is proper to acquaint you, in confidence, with my grounds for it. — These are they:

She had desired me to let Mr. Hickman drop hints to the above effect to her uncle Harlowe; but indirectly as from himself, lest, if the application should not be attended with success, and Mr. Lovelace (who already takes it ill, that he has so little of her favor) come to know it, she may be deprived of every protection, and be, perhaps, subjected to great inconveniencies from so haughty a spirit.

Having this authority from her, and being very solicitous about the success of the application, I thought, that if the weight of so good a wife, mother, and sister, as Mrs. Harlowe is known to be, were thrown into the same scale with that of Mr. John Harlowe (supposing he could be engaged) it could hardly fail of making a due impression.

Mr. Hickman will see Mr. John Harlowe to morrow: by that time you may see Mrs. Harlowe. If Mr. Hickman finds the old gentleman favorable, he will tell him, that you will have seen Mrs. Harlowe upon the same account; and will advise him to join in consultation with her, how best to proceed to melt the most obdurate hearts in the world.

This is the fair state of the matter, and my true motive for writing to you. I leave all, therefore, to

your discretion; and most heartily wish success to it; being of opinion that Mr. Lovelace cannot possibly deserve our admirable friend: nor, indeed, know I the man that does.

Pray acquaint me by a line of the result of your interposition. If it prove not such as may be reasonably hoped for, our dear friend shall know nothing of this step from me, and pray let her not from you. For, in that case, it would only give deeper grief to a heart already too much afflicted. I am, dear and worthy Mrs. Norton,

Your true friend,

ANNA HOWE.

LETTER XIV.

Mrs. NORTON, To Miss HOWE.

Saturday, *May* 13.

Dear Madam,

MY heart is almost broken to be obliged to let you know, that such is the situation of things in the family of my ever dear Miss Harlowe, that there can be at present no success expected from any application in her favor. Her poor mother is to be pitied. I have a most affecting letter from her; but must not communicate it to you; and she forbids me

to let it be known that she writes upon the subject; although she is compelled, as it were, to do it, for the ease of her own heart. I mention it, therefore, in confidence.

I hope in God that my beloved young Lady has preserved her honor inviolate. I hope there is not a man breathing, who could attempt a sacrifice so detestable. I have no apprehension of a failure in a virtue so established. God for ever keep so pure a heart out of the reach of surprises and violence! Ease, dear Madam, I beseech you, my over-anxious heart, by one line by the bearer, altho' but one line, to acquaint me (as surely you can) that her honor is unfulled. — If it be not, adieu to all the comforts this life can give: since none will it be able to afford

To the poor

JUDITH NORTON.

L E T T E R X V.

Miss HOWE, To Mrs. JUDITH NORTON.

Saturday Evening, *May* 13.

Dear good woman,

YOUR beloved's honor is inviolate! — Must be inviolate! And will be so, in spite of men and devils. Could I have had hope of a reconciliation, all my view was, that she should not have had this man. — All that can be said now, is, she must run the risk of a bad husband: she of whom no man living is worthy!

You pity her mother — So do not I! I pity no mother, that puts it out of her power to show maternal love, and humanity, in order to patch up for herself a precarious and sorry quiet, which every blast of wind shall disturb.

I hate tyrants in every form and shape: but paternal and maternal tyrants are the worst of all: for they can have no bowels.

I repeat, that I pity none of them. Our beloved friend only deserves pity. She had never been in the hands of this man, but for them. She is quite blameless. You don't know all her story. Were I to tell you that she had no intention to go off with this man, it would avail her nothing. It would only serve to condemn, with those who

drove her to extremities, him, who now must be her refuge. I am

Your sincere friend and servant,

ANNA HOWE.

LETTER XVI.

Mrs. HARLOWE, To Mrs. NORTON.

(Not communicated till the letters came to be collected.)

Saturday, May 13.

I RETURN an answer in writing, as I promised, to your communication. But take no notice either to my Bella's Betty (who I understand sometimes visits you) or to the poor wretch herself, nor to any body, that I do write. I charge you don't. My heart is full: writing may give some vent to my griefs, and, perhaps, I may write what lies most upon my heart, without confining myself strictly to the present subject.

You know how dear this ungrateful creature ever was to us all. You know how sincerely we joined with every one of those who ever had seen her, or conversed with her, to praise and admire her; and exceeded in our praise even the bounds of that modesty, which, because she was our own, should have restrained us; being of opinion, that to have

been silent in the praise of so apparent a merit, must rather have argued blindness or affectation in us, than that we should incur the censure of vain partiality to our own.

When, therefore, any body congratulated us on such a daughter, we received their congratulations without any diminution. If it was said, You are happy in this child; we owned, that no parents ever were happier in a child. If more particularly they praised her dutiful behaviour to us, we said, She knew not how to offend. If it was said, Miss Clarissa Harlowe has a wit and penetration beyond her years; we, instead of disallowing it, would add—And a judgment no less extraordinary than her wit. If her prudence was praised, and a forethought, which every one saw supplied what only years and experience gave to others—Nobody need to scruple taking lessons from Clarissa Harlowe—was our proud answer.

Forgive me, O forgive me, my dear Norton — But I know you will; for yours, when good, was this child, and your glory as well as mine.

But have you not heard strangers, as she passed to and from church, stop to praise the angel of a creature, as they called her; when it was enough for those who knew who she was, to cry, Why, it is Miss Clarissa Harlowe! — as if every body were obliged to know, or to have heard of Clarissa Harlowe, and of her excellencies. While, accustomed to praise, it was too familiar to her, to cause her to alter either her look or her pace.

For my own part, I could not stifle a pleasure,

that had, perhaps, a faulty vanity for its foundation, whenever I was spoken of, or addressed to, as the mother of so sweet a child: Mr. Harlowe and I, all the time, loving each other the better for the share each had in such a daughter.

Still, still, indulge the fond, the overflowing heart of a mother! I could dwell for ever upon the remembrance of what she was, would but that remembrance banish from my mind what she is!

In her bosom, young as she was, could I repose all my griefs—Sure of receiving from her prudence advice as well as comfort; and both insinuated in so humble, in so dutiful a manner, that it was impossible to take those exceptions which the distance of years and character between a mother and a daughter would have made one apprehensive of from any other daughter. She was our glory when abroad, our delight when at home. Every body was even covetous of her company; and we grudged her to our brothers Harlowe, and to our sister and brother Hervey. No other contention among us, then, but who should be next favored by her. No chiding ever knew she from us, but the chiding of lovers, when she was for shutting herself up too long together from us, in pursuit of those charming amusements and useful employments, for which, however, the whole family was the better.

Our other children had reason (good children as they always were) to think themselves neglected. But they likewise were so sensible of their sister's superiority, and of the honor she reflected upon the whole family, that they confessed themselves eclipsed,

without envying the eclipser. Indeed there was not any body so equal with her, in their own opinions, as to envy what all aspired but to imitate. The dear creature, you know, my Norton, gave an eminence to us all!

Then her acquirements: her skill in music, her fine needle works, her elegance in dress; for which she was so much admired, that the neighbouring Ladies used to say, that they need not fetch fashions from London; since whatever Miss Clarissa Harlowe wore, was the best fashion, because her choice of natural beauties set those of art far behind them. Her genteel ease, and fine turn of person; her deep reading; and these, joined to her open manners, and her chearful modesty — O my good Norton, what a sweet child was once my Clary Harlowe.

This, and more, you knew her to be: for many of her excellencies were owing to yourself; and with the milk you gave her, you gave her what no other nurse in the world could give her.

And do you think, my worthy woman, do you think, that the wilful lapse of such a child is to be forgiven? Can she herself think, that she deserves not the severest punishment for the abuse of such talents as were entrusted to her?

Her fault was a fault of premeditation, of cunning, of contrivance. She has deceived every body's expectations. Her whole sex, as well as the family she sprung from, is disgraced by it.

Would any body ever have believed, that such a young creature as this, who had by her advice

saved even her-over lively friend from marrying a fop, and a libertine, would herself have gone off with one of the vilest and most notorious of libertines? A man whose character she knew, and knew it to be worse than the character of him from whom she saved her friend; a man against whom she was warned: one who had had her brother's life in his hands; and who constantly set our whole family at defiance.

Think for me, my good Norton, think what my unhappiness must be, both as a wife and a mother. What restless days, what sleepless nights; yet my own rankling anguish endeavoured to be smoothed over, to soften the anguish of fiercer spirits, and to keep them from blazing out to further mischief! O this naughty, naughty girl! who knew so well what she did; and who could look so far into consequences, that we thought she would have died, rather than have done as she has done!

Her known character for prudence leaves her absolutely without excuse. How then can I offer to plead for her, if, through motherly indulgence, I would forgive her myself? — And have we not, moreover, suffered all the disgrace that can befall us? Has not she?

If now she has so little liking to his morals, had she not reason before to have as little? Or has she suffered by them in her own person? — O my good woman, I doubt—I doubt—Will not the character of the man make one doubt an angel, if once in his power? The world will think the worst. I am

told it does. So likewise her father fears; her brother hears; and what can I do?

Our antipathy to him she knew before, as well as his character. These, therefore, cannot be new motives without a new reason. — O my dear Mrs. Norton, how shall I, how can you, support ourselves under the apprehensions to which these thoughts lead!

He continually pressing her, you say, to marry him: his friends likewise. She has reason, no doubt she has reason, for this application to us: and her crime is glossed over, to bring her to us with new disgrace! Whither, whither, does one guilty step lead the misguided heart! — And now, truly, to save a stubborn spirit, we are only to be sounded, that the application may be occasionally retracted or denied!

Upon the whole: were I inclined to plead for her, it is now the most improper of all times. Now that my brother Harlowe has discouraged (as he last night came hither on purpose to tell us) Mr. Hickman's insinuated application; and been applauded for it. Now, that my brother Antony is intending to carry his great fortune, through her fault, into another family:—She expecting, no doubt, herself, to be put into her grandfather's estate, in consequence of a reconciliation, and as a reward for her fault: and insisting still upon the same terms which she offered before, and which were rejected — Not through my fault, I am sure, rejected!

For all these things, you will return such an

answer as the case requires. It might cost me the peace of my whole life, at this time, to move for her. God forgive her! If I do, nobody else will. And let it, for your own sake, as well as mine, be a secret that you and I have entered upon this subject. And I desire you not to touch upon it again, but by particular permission: for, O my dear good woman, it sets my heart a bleeding in as many streams as there are veins in it!

Yet think me not impenetrable by a proper contrition and remorse—But what a torment is it to have a will without a power!

Adieu, adieu! God give us both comfort; and to the once dear—the ever dear creature (for can a mother forget her child?) repentance, deep repentance! And as little suffering as may besit His Blessed Will, and her grievous fault, prays

Your real friend,

CHARLOTTE HARLOWE.

L E T T E R XVII.

Miss HOWE, To Miss CLARISSA HARLOWE.

Sunday, *May* 14.

HOW it is now, my dear, between you and Mr. Lovelace, I cannot tell. But wicked as the man is, I am afraid he must be your Lord and Master.

I called him by several very hard names in my last. I had but just heard of some of his vilenesses, when I sat down to write; so my indignation was raised. But on inquiry, and recollection, I find that the facts laid to his charge were all of them committed some time ago — not since he has had strong hopes of your favor.

This is saying something for him. His generous behaviour to the innkeeper's daughter, is a more recent instance to his credit; to say nothing of the universal good character he has as a kind landlord. And then I approve much of the motion he made to put you in possession of Mrs. Fetchville's house, while he continues at the other widow's, till you agree that one house shall hold you. I wish this were done. Be sure you embrace this offer, if you do not soon meet at the altar, and get one of his cousins with you.

Were you once married, I should think you cannot be very unhappy, though you may not be
so.

so happy with him as you deserve to be. The stake he has in his country, and his reversions; the care he takes of his affairs; his freedom from obligation; nay, his pride, with your merit, must be a tolerable security for you, I should think. Though particulars of his wickedness, as they come to my knowledge, hurt and incense me; yet, after all, when I give myself time to reflect, all that I have heard of him to his disadvantage was comprehended in the general character given of him long ago, by Lord M.'s and his own dismissed bailiff, and which was confirmed to me by Mrs. Fortescue, as I, heretofore, told you, and to you by Mrs. Greme.

You can have nothing, therefore, I think, to be deeply concerned about, but his future good, and the bad example he may hereafter set to his own family. These, indeed, are very just concerns: but were you to leave him now, either with or without his consent, his fortune and alliances so considerable, his person and address so engaging (every one excusing you now on those accounts, and because of your relations' follies) it would have a very ill appearance for your reputation. I cannot, therefore, on the most deliberate consideration, advise you to think of that, while you have no reason to doubt his honor. May eternal vengeance pursue the villain if he give room for an apprehension of this nature!

Yet his teasing ways are intolerable: his acquiescence with your flight delays, and his resignedness to the distance you now keep him at (for a fault so

much flighter as he must think, than the punishment) are unaccountable: he doubts your love of him, that is very probable; but you have reason to be surpris'd at his want of ardor; a blessing so great within his reach, as I may say.

By the time you have read to this place, you will have no doubt of what has been the issue of the conference between the two gentlemen. I am equally shocked, and enraged against them all. Against them all, I say; for I have tried your good Norton's weight with your mother (though at first I did not intend to tell you so) to the same purpose as the gentleman founded your uncle. Never were there such determined brutes in the world! Why should I mince the matter? Yet would I fain methinks make an exception for your mother.

Your uncle will have it, that you are ruined. "He can believe every thing bad of a creature, he says, who could run away with a man; with such a one especially as Lovelace. They expected applications from you, when some heavy distress had fallen upon you. But they are all resolved not to stir an inch in your favor; no, not to save your life!"

My dearest soul, resolve to assert your right. Claim your own, and go and live upon it, as you ought. Then, if you marry not, how will the wretches creep to you, for your reversionary dispositions.

You were accused (as in your aunt's letter) "of premeditation and contrivance in your escape." Instead of pitying you, the mediating person was

called upon “to pity them; who once, your uncle said, doted upon you: who took no joy but in your presence: who devoured your words as you spoke them: who trod over again your footsteps, as you walked before them.”—And I know not what of this sort.

Upon the whole, it is now evident to me, and so it must be to you, when you read this letter, that you must be his. And the sooner you are so, the better. Shall we suppose that marriage is not in your power?—I cannot have patience to suppose that.

I am concerned, methinks, to know how you will do to condescend (now you see you must be his) after you have kept him at such a distance; and for the revenge his pride may put him upon taking for it. But let me tell you, that if my going up, and sharing fortunes with you, will prevent such a noble creature from stooping too low; much more, were it likely to prevent your ruin, I would not hesitate a moment about it. What is the whole world to me, weighed against such a friend as you are? Think you, that any of the enjoyments of this life could be enjoyments to me, were you involved in calamities, from which I could either alleviate or relieve you, by giving up those enjoyments? And what in saying this, and acting up to it, do I offer you, but the fruits of a friendship your worth has created.

Excuse my warmth of expression. The warmth of my heart wants none. I am enraged at your relations; for, bad as what I have mentioned is,

I have not told you all; nor now, perhaps, ever will. I am angry at my own mother's narrowness of mind, and at her indiscriminate adherence to old notions. And I am exasperated against your foolish, your low-vanityed Lovelace. But let us stoop to take the wretch as he is, and make the best of him since you are destined to stoop, to keep grovelers and worldlings in countenance. He has not been guilty of direct indecency to you. Nor dare he.—Not so much of a devil as that comes to neither. Had he such villanous intentions, so much in his power as you are, they would have shown themselves before now to such a penetrating and vigilant eye, and to such a pure heart as yours. Let us save the wretch then, if we can, though we soil our fingers in lifting him up from his dirt.

There is yet, to a person of your fortune and independence, a good deal to do, if you enter upon those terms which ought to be entered upon. I don't find, that he has once talked of settlements; nor yet of the licence. A foolish wretch!—But as your evil destiny has thrown you out of all other protection and mediation, you must be father, mother, uncle to yourself; and enter upon the requisite points for yourself. It is hard upon you; but, indeed you must. Your situation requires it. What room for delicacy now?—Or would you have me write to him? Yet that would be the same thing, as if you were to write yourself. Yet write you should, I think, if you cannot speak. But speaking is certainly best: for words leave no traces; they pass as breath; and mingle with the air; and may be

explained with latitude. But the pen is a witness on record.

I know the gentleness of your spirit; I know the laudable pride of your heart; and the just notion you have of the dignity of our sex, in these delicate points. But once more, all this is nothing now: your honor is concerned that the dignity I speak of, should not be stood upon.

“Mr. Lovelace,” would I say; yet hate the foolish fellow, for his low, his stupid pride, in wishing to triumph over the dignity of his own wife;—“I am by your means deprived of every friend I have in the world. In what light am I to look upon you? I have well considered every thing. You have made some people, much against my liking, think me a wife: others know I am not married; nor do I desire any body should believe I am. Do you think your being here in the same house with me can be to my reputation? You talked to me of Mrs. Fetchville’s house.” This will bring him to renew his last discourse on that subject, if he does not revive it of himself. “If Mrs. Fetchville knows not her own mind, what is her house to me? You talked of bringing up your cousin Montague to bear me company: if my brother’s schemes be your pretence for not going yourself to fetch her, you can write to her. I insist upon bringing these two points to an issue: off or on, ought to be indifferent to me, if so to them.”

Such a declaration must bring all forward. There are twenty ways, my dear, that you would find out for another in your circumstances. He will

disdain, from his native insolence, to have it thought he has any body to consult. Well then, will he not be obliged to declare himself? And if he does, no delays on your side, I beseech you. Give him the day. Let it be a short one. It would be derogating from your own merit, and honor too, let me tell you, even altho' he should not be so explicit as he ought to be, to seem but to doubt his meaning; and to wait for that explanation for which I should for ever despise him, if he makes it necessary. Twice already have you, my dear, if not oftener, modesty away such opportunities as you ought not to have slipt. As to settlements, if they come not in naturally, even leave them to his own justice, and to the justice of his family. And there's an end of the matter.

This is my advice: mend it as circumstances offer, and follow your own. But indeed, my dear, this, or something like it, would I do. And let him tell me afterwards, if he dared or would, that he humbled down to his shoe-buckles the person it would have been his glory to exalt.

Support yourself mean time with reflections worthy of yourself. Though tricked into this man's power, you are not meanly subjugated to it. All his reverence you command, or rather, as I may say, inspire; since it was never known, that he had any reverence for aught that was good, till you was with him: and he professes now and then to be so awed and charmed by your example, as that the force of it shall reclaim him.

I believe you will have a difficult task to keep

him to it: but the more will be your honor, if you effect his reformation: and it is my belief, that if you can reclaim this great, this specious deceiver, who has, morally speaking, such a number of years before him, you will save from ruin a multitude of innocents; for those seem to me to have been the prey for which he has spread his wicked snares. And who knows but, for this very purpose principally, a person may have been permitted to swerve, whose heart or will never was in her error, and who has so much remorse upon her for having, as she thinks, erred at all? Adieu, my dearest friend.

ANNA HOWE.

Inclosed in the above.

I MUST trouble you with my concerns, though your own are so heavy upon you. A piece of news I have to tell you. Your uncle Antony is disposed to marry. With whom, think you? With my mother. True indeed. Your family know it. All is laid with redoubled malice at your door. And there the old Soul himself lays it.

Take no notice of this intelligence, not so much as in your letters to me, for fear of accidents.

I think it can't do. But were I to provoke my mother, that might afford a pretence. Else, I should have been with you before now, I fancy.

G 4

The first likelihood that appears to me of encouragement, I dismiss Hickman, that's certain. If my mother disoblige me in so important an article, I shan't think of obliging her in such another. It is impossible, surely, that the desire of popping me off to that honest man can be with such a view.

I repeat that it cannot come to any thing. But these widows—Then such a love in us all, both old and young, of being courted and admired!—And so irresistible to their elderships to be flattered that all power is not over with them; but that they may still class and prank it with their daughters—It vexed me heartily to have her tell me of this proposal with self-complaisant simperings; and yet she affected to speak of it, as if she had no intention to encourage it.

These antiquated bachelors (old before they believe themselves to be so) imagine, that when they have once persuaded themselves to think of the state, they have nothing more to do than to make their minds known to the woman.

Your uncle's overgrown fortune is indeed a bait; a tempting one. A faucy daughter to be got rid of! The memory of the father of that daughter not precious enough to weigh much!—But let him advance if he dare—Let her encourage——But I hope she won't.

Excuse me, my dear. I am nettled. They have fearfully rumbled my gorget. You'll think me faulty. So I won't put my name to this separate paper. Other hands may resemble mine. You did not see me write it.

L E T T E R X V I I I.

Miss CLARISSA HARLOWE, To Miss HOWE.

Monday Afternoon, *May* 15.

NOW indeed it is evident, my best, my only friend, that I have but one choice to make. And now do I find, that I have carried my resentment against this man too far; since now I am to appear as if under an obligation to his patience with me for a conduct, which, perhaps, he will think (if not humorfome and childish) plainly demonstrative of my little esteem of him; of but a secondary esteem at least, where before, his pride rather than his merit, had made him expect a first. O my dear! to be cast upon a man, that is not a generous man; that is indeed a cruel man! A man that is capable of creating a distress to a young creature, who by her evil destiny is thrown into his power; and then of enjoying it, as I may say! (I verily think I may say so, of this savage!) — What a fate is mine!

You give me, my dear, good advice, as to the peremptory manner in which I ought to treat him: but do you consider to whom it is that you give it? And then should I take it, and should he be capable of delay, I unprotected, desolate, nobody to fly to, in what a wretched light must I stand in his eyes; and, what is still as bad, in my own! O my dear, see you not, as I do, that the occasion for this my

indelicate, my shocking situation, should never have been given by me, of all creatures; since I am unequal, utterly unequal, to the circumstances to which my inconsideration has reduced me! What, I, to challenge a man for a husband!—I, to exert myself to quicken the delayer in his resolutions! And, having as you think, lost an opportunity, to begin to try to recal it, as from myself, and for myself! To threaten him, as I may say, into the marriage state!—O my dear! if this be right to be done, how difficult is it, where modesty and self (or where pride if you please) is concerned, to do that right? Or, to express myself in your words, to be father, mother, uncle, to myself!—Especially where one thinks a triumph over one is intended.

You say, you have tried Mrs. Norton's weight with my mother.—Bad as the returns are which my application by Mr. Hickman has met with, you tell me that you have not acquainted me with all the bad; nor now, perhaps ever will. But why so, my dear? What is the bad, what can be the bad, which now you will never tell me of?—What worse, than renounce me! and for ever! “My uncle, you say, believes me ruined: he declares, that he can believe every thing bad of a creature who could run away with a man: and they have all made a resolution, not to stir an inch in my favor; no, not to save my life.”—Have you worse than this, my dear, behind?—Surely my father has not renewed his dreadful malediction!—Surely, if so, my mother has not joined in it! Have my uncles given it their sanction, and made it a family

act? And themselves thereby more really faulty, than even they suppose me to be, though I the cause of that greater fault in them? — What, my dear, is the worst, that you will leave for ever unrevealed?

O Lovelace! why comest thou not just now, while these black prospects are before me? For now, couldst thou look into my heart, wouldst thou see a distress worthy of thy barbarous triumph!

* * *

I was forced to quit my pen. And you say you have tried Mrs. Norton's weight with my mother?

What is done cannot be remedied: but I wish you had not taken a step of this importance to me without first consulting me. Forgive me, my dear, but I must tell you that that high-soul'd and noble friendship, which you have ever avowed with so obliging and so uncommon a warmth, altho' it has been always the subject of my grateful admiration, has been often the ground of my apprehension, because of its unbridled fervor.

Well, but now to look forward, you are of opinion that I must be his: and that I cannot leave him with reputation to myself, whether with or without his consent. I must, if so, make the best of the bad matter.

He went out in the morning; intending not to return to dinner, unless (as he sent me word) I would admit him to dine with me.

I excused myself. The man whose anger is now

to be of such high importance to me, was, it seems, displeased.

As he, as well as I, expected that I should receive a letter from you this day by Collins, I suppose he will not be long before he returns; and then, possibly, he is to be mighty stately, mighty mannish, mighty coy, if you please! And then must I be very humble, very submissive, and try to insinuate myself into his good graces: with downcast eye, if not by speech, beg his forgiveness for the distance I have so perversely kept him at! — Yes, I warrant! — But I shall see how this behaviour will fit upon me! — You have always rallied me upon my meekness, I think: well then, I will try, if I can be still meeker, shall I? — O my dear! —

But let me sit with my hands before me, all patience, all resignation; for I think I hear him coming up. Or shall I roundly accost him, in the words, in the form, which you, my dear, have prescribed?

He is come in. He has sent to me, all impatience, as Dorcas says, by his aspect. — But I cannot, cannot see him!

Monday Night.

The contents of your letter, and my own heavy reflections, rendered me incapable of seeing this expecting man. The first word he asked Dorcas, was, If I had received a letter since he had been out? She told me this; and her answer, that I had; and was fasting, and had been in tears ever since.

He sent to desire an interview with me.

I answered by her, That I was not very well. In the morning, if better, I would see him as soon as he pleased.

Very humble! was it not, my dear? Yet he was too royal to take it for humility; for Dorcas told me, he rubbed one side of his face impatiently; and said a rash word, and was out of humor; stalking about the room.

Half an hour after, he sent again; desiring very earnestly, that I would admit him to supper with me. He would enter upon no subjects of conversation, but what I should lead to.

So I should have been at liberty, you see, to court him!

I again desired to be excused.

Indeed, my dear, my eyes were swelled: I was very low-spirited; and could not think of entering all at once, after the distance I had kept him at for several days, into the freedom of conversation which the utter rejection I have met with from my relations, as well as your advice, has made necessary.

He sent up to me, that as he heard I was fasting, if I would promise to eat some chicken which Mrs. Sinclair had ordered for supper, he would acquiesce. —Very kind in his anger! — Is he not?

I promised that I would. Can I be more preparatively condescending? — How happy, I'll warrant, if I may meet him in a kind and forgiving temper!

I hate myself! — But I won't be insulted — Indeed I won't, for all this.

LETTER XIX.

Miss CLARISSA HARLOWE, To Miss HOWE.

Tuesday, *May* 16.

I THINK once more, we seem to be in a kind of train; but through a storm. I will give you the particulars,

I heard him in the diningroom at five in the morning. I had rested very ill, and was up too. But opened not my door till six: when Dorcas brought me his request for my company.

He approached me, and taking my hand, as I entered the diningroom, I went not to bed, Madam, till two, said he, yet slept not a wink. For God's sake, torment me not, as you have done for a week past.

He paused. I was silent.

At first, proceeded he, I thought your resentment of a curiosity, in which I had been disappointed, could not be deep; and that it would go off of itself: but when I found it was to be kept up till you knew the success of some new overtures which you had made, and which, complied with, might have deprived me of you for ever; how, Madam, could I support myself under the thoughts of having, with such an union of interests, made so little impression upon your mind in my favor?

He paused again. I was still silent. He went on.

I acknowledge that I have a proud heart, Madam. I cannot but hope for some instances of previous and preferable favor from the Lady I am ambitious to call mine; and that her choice of me should not appear, not flagrantly appear, directed by the perverseness of her selfish persecutors, who are my irreconcilable enemies.

More to the same purpose he said. You know, my dear, the room he had given me to recriminate upon him in twenty instances. I did not spare him.

Every one of these instances, said I (after I had enumerated them) convinces me of your pride indeed, Sir, but not of your merit. I confess, that I have as much pride as you can have, altho' I hope it is of another kind than that you so readily avow. But if, Sir, you have the least mixture in yours, of that pride which may be expected, and thought laudable, in a man of your birth, alliances, and fortune, you should rather wish, I will presume to say, to promote what you call my pride, than either to suppress it, or to regret that I have it. It is this my acknowledged pride, proceeded I, that induces me to tell you, Sir, that I think it beneath me to disown what have been my motives for declining, for some days past, any conversation with you, or visit from Mr. Mennell, that might lead to points out of my power to determine upon, until I heard from my uncle Harlowe; whom, I confess, I caused to be sounded, whether I might be favored with his interest, to obtain for me a reconciliation with my friends, upon terms which I had caused to be proposed.

I know not, said he, and suppose must not presume to ask, what these terms were. But I can but too well guess at them; and that I was to have been the preliminary sacrifice. But you must allow me, Madam, to say, that as much as I admire the nobleness of your sentiments in general, and in particular that laudable pride which you have spoken off; I wish that I could compliment you with such an uniformity in it, as had set you as much above all submission to minds implacable and unreasonable (I hope I may, without offence, say, that your brother's and sister's are such) as it has above all favor and condescension to me.

Duty and nature, Sir, call upon me to make the submissions you speak of: there is a father, there is a mother, there are uncles in the one case, to justify and demand those submissions—What, pray, Sir, can be pleaded for the condescension, as you call it?—Will you say, your merits, either with regard to them, or to myself, may?

This, Madam, to be said, after the persecutions of those relations! After what you have suffered! After what you have made me hope! Let me, my dearest creature, ask you (we have been talking of pride) what sort of pride must his be, which can dispense with inclination and preference in the Lady whom he adores?—What must be that love—

Love, Sir! who talks of love?—Was not merit the thing we were talking of?—Have I ever professed, have I ever required of you professions of a passion of that nature!—But there is no end of these debates; each so faultless, each so full of self—

I do

I do not think myself faultless, Madam:—But—

But what, Sir! — Would you evermore argue with me as if you were a child? — Seeking palliations, and making promises? — Promises of what, Sir? Of being in future the man it is a shame a gentleman is not? — Of being the man —

Good God! interrupted he, with eyes lifted up, if thou wert to be thus severe —

Well, well, Sir, (impatiently) I need only to observe, that all this vast difference in sentiments shows how unpaired our minds are — So let us —

Let us what, Madam! — My soul is rising into tumults! And he looked so wildly, that I was a good deal terrified — Let us what, Madam! —

I was, however, resolved not to desert myself — Why, Sir, let us resolve to quit every regard for each other — Nay, flame not out — I am a poor weak-minded creature in some things: but where what I should be, or not deserve to live, if I am not, is in the question, I have a great and invincible spirit, or my own conceit betrays me — Let us resolve to quit every regard for each other that is more than civil. This you may depend upon; I will never marry any other man. I have seen enough of your sex, at least of you. — A single life shall ever be my choice: while I will leave you at liberty to pursue your own.

Indifference, worse than indifference! said he, in a passion —

Interrupting him — Indifference let it be — You have not (in my opinion at least) deserved that it should be other: if you have in your own, you have

cause (at least your pride has) to hate me for misjudging you.

Dearest, dearest creature! snatching my hand with fierceness, let me beseech you to be uniformly noble! Civil regards, Madam! — Civil regards! — Can you so expect to narrow and confine such a passion as mine!

Such a passion as yours, Mr. Lovelace, deserves to be narrowed and confined. It is either the passion you do not think it, or I do not. I question whether your mind is capable of being so narrowed and so widened, as is necessary to make it be what I wish it to be. Lift up your hands and your eyes, Sir, in silent wonder, if you please: but what does that wonder express, what does it convince me of, but that we are not born for one another?

By my soul, said he, and grasped my hand with an eagerness that hurt it, we were born for one another: you must be mine — You shall be mine (and put his other arm round me) altho' my damnation were to be the purchase!

I was still more terrified — Let me leave you, Mr. Lovelace, said I; or do you begone from me. Is the passion you boast of, to be thus shockingly demonstrated?

You must not go, Madam! — You must not leave me in anger —

I will return — I will return — When you can be less violent — less shocking.

And he let me go.

The man quite frightened me; insomuch that when

I got into my chamber, I found a sudden flow of tears a great relief to me.

In half an hour, he sent a little billet, expressing his concern for the vehemence of his behaviour, and praying to see me.

I went. Because I could not help myself, I went.

He was full of his excuses.—O my dear, what would you, even you, do with such a man as this; and in my situation?

It was very possible for him now, he said, to account for the workings of a beginning phrensy. For his part, he was near distraction. All last week to suffer as he had suffered; and now to talk of civil regards only, when he had hoped from the nobleness of my mind—

Hope what you will, interrupted I; I must insist upon it, that our minds are by no means suited to each other. You have brought me into difficulties. I am deserted by every friend but Miss Howe. My true sentiments I will not conceal—It is against my will, that I must submit to owe protection from a brother's projects, which Miss Howe thinks are not given over, to you, who have brought me into these streights: not with own concurrence brought me into them; remember that—

I do remember that, Madam!—So often reminded, how can I forget it?

Yet will I owe to you this protection, if it be necessary, in the earnest hope, that you will shun rather than seek mischief, if any further inquiry after me be made. But what hinders you from

leaving me?—Cannot I send to you? The widow Fetchville, it is plain, knows not her own mind: the people here, indeed, are more civil to me every day than other: but I had rather have lodgings more agreeable to my circumstances. I best know what will suit them; and am resolved not to be obliged to any body. If you leave me, I will privately retire to some one of the neighbouring villages, and there wait my cousin Morden's arrival with patience.

I presume, Madam, replied he, from what you have said, that your application to Harlowe-place has proved unsuccessful: I therefore hope, that you will now give me leave to mention the terms in the nature of settlements, which I have long intended to propose to you; and which having till now delayed to do, through accidents not proceeding from myself, I had thoughts of urging to you the moment you entered upon your new house; and upon your finding yourself as independent in appearance as you are in fact. Permit me, Madam, to propose these matters to you—Not with an expectation of an immediate answer; but for your consideration.

Were not hesitation, a self-felt glow, a downcast eye, encouragement more than enough? And yet you will observe (as I now do on recollection) that he was in no great hurry to solicit for a day; since he had no thoughts of proposing settlements, till I had got into my new house; and now, in his great complaisance to me, he desired leave to propose his terms, not with an expectation of my

immediate answer; but for my consideration only. Yet, my dear, your advice was too much in my head at this time. I hesitated.

He urged on upon my silence: he would call God to witness to the justice, nay to the generosity of his intentions to me; if I would be so good as to hear what he had to propose to me, as to settlements.

Could not the man have fallen into the subject without this parade? Many a point, you know, is refused, and ought to be refused, if leave be asked to introduce it; and when once refused, the refusal must in honor be adhered to — Whereas, had it been slid in upon one, as I may say, it might have merited further consideration. If such a man as Mr. Lovelace knows not this, who should?

But he seemed to think it enough that he had asked my leave to propose his settlements. He took no advantage of my silence, as I presume men as modest as Mr. Lovelace would have done, in a like case: yet, gazing in my face very confidently, and seeming to expect my answer, I thought myself obliged to give the subject a more diffuse turn, in order to save myself the mortification of appearing too ready in my compliance, after such a distance as had been between us; and yet (in pursuance of your advice) I was willing to avoid the necessity of giving him such a repulse, as might again throw us out of the course. A cruel alternative to be reduced to!

You talk of generosity, Mr. Lovelace, said I; and you talk of justice; perhaps without having

considered the force of the words, in the sense you use them on this occasion.—Let me tell you what generosity is, in my sense of the word—True generosity is not confined to pecuniary instances: it is more than politeness: it is more than good faith: it is more than honor: it is more than justice: since all these are but duties, and what a worthy mind cannot dispense with. But true generosity is greatness of soul. It incites us to do more by a fellow creature, than can be strictly required of us. It obliges us to hasten to the relief of an object that wants relief; anticipating even such a one's hope or expectation. Generosity, Sir, will not surely permit a worthy mind to doubt of its honorable and beneficent intentions: much less will it allow itself to shock, to offend any one; and, least of all, a person thrown by adversity, mishap, or accident, into its protection.

What an opportunity had he to clear his intentions, had he been so disposed, from the latter part of this home observation!—But he ran away with the first, and kept to that.

Admirably defined! he said.—But who at this rate, Madam, can be said to be generous to you?—Your generosity I implore; while justice, as it must be my sole merit, shall be my aim. Never was there a woman of such nice and delicate sentiments!

It is a reflection upon yourself, Sir, and upon the company you have kept, if you think these notions either nice or delicate. Thousands of my sex are more nice than I; for they would have avoided the

devious path I have been surpris'd into : the consequences of which surpris'e have laid me under the sad necessity of telling a man, who has not delicacy enough to enter into those parts of the female character which are its glory and distinction, what true generosity is.

His divine monitress, he called me. He would endeavour to form his manners (as he had often promis'd) by my example. But he hop'd I would now permit him to mention briefly the justice he propos'd to do me, in the terms of the settlements ; a subject so proper, before now, to have been enter'd upon ; and which would have been enter'd upon long ago, had not my frequent displeasure (I am ever in fault, my dear!) taken from him the opportunity he had often wish'd for : but now having ventur'd to lay hold of this, nothing should divert him from improving it.

I have no spirits, just now, Sir, to attend to such weighty points. What you have a mind to propose, write to me : and I shall know what answer to return. Only one thing let me remind you of, that if you touch upon any subject, in which my father has a concern, I shall judge by your treatment of the father, what value you have for the daughter.

He look'd as if he would chuse rather to speak than write : but had he said so, I had a severe return to have made upon him ; as possibly he might see by my looks.

* * *

In this way are we now : a sort of calm, as I

said, succeeding a storm. What may happen next, whether a storm or a calm, with such a spirit as I have to deal with, who can tell?

But be that as it will, I think, my dear, I am not meanly off: and that is a great point with me; and which I know you will be glad to hear: if it were only, that I can see this man without losing any of that dignity (what other word can I use, speaking of myself, that betokens decency, and not arrogance?) which is so necessary to enable me to look up, or rather with the minds eye, I may say, to look down upon a man of this man's cast.

Altho' circumstances have so offered, that I could not take your advice as to the manner of dealing with him; yet you gave me so much courage by it, as has enabled me to conduct things to this issue; as well as determined me against leaving him: which before, I was thinking to do, at all adventures. Whether, when it came to the point, I should have done so, or not, I cannot say, because it would have depended upon his behaviour at the time.

But let his behaviour be what it will, I am afraid (with you) that, should any thing offer at last to oblige me to leave him, I shall not mend my situation in the world's eye, but the contrary. And yet I will not be treated by him with indignity while I have any power to help myself.

You, my dear, have accused me of having modesty away, as you phrase it, several opportunities of being—being what, my dear?—Why, the wife of a libertine: and what a libertine and his wife are, my cousin Morden's letter tells us.—Let

me here, once for all, endeavour to account for the motives of my behaviour to this man, and for the principles I have proceeded upon, as they appear to me upon a close self-examination.

Be pleased then to allow me to think, that my motives on this occasion, arise not altogether from maidenly niceness; nor yet from the apprehension of what my present tormentor, and future husband, may think of a precipitate compliance, on such a disagreeable behaviour as his: but they arise principally from what offers to my own heart; respecting, as I may say, its own rectitude, its own judgment of the fit and the unfit; as I would, without study, answer for myself to myself, in the first place; to him, and to the world, in the second only. Principles that are in my mind; that I found there; implanted, no doubt, by the first gracious Planter: which, therefore, impel me, as I may say, to act up to them, that thereby I may, to the best of my judgment, be enabled to comport myself worthily in both states (the single and the married) let others act as they will by me.

I hope, my dear, I do not deceive myself, and instead of setting about rectifying what is amiss in my heart, endeavour to find excuses for habits and peculiarities, which I am unwilling to cast off or overcome. The heart is very deceitful: do you, my dear friend, lay mine open (but surely it is always open before you!) and spare me not, if you think it culpable.

This observation, once for all, as I said, I thought proper to make, to convince you, that, to the best

of my judgment, my errors, in matters as well of lesser moment, as of greater, shall rather be the fault of my judgment, than of my will.

I am, my dearest friend,

Your ever obliged

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER XX.

Miss CLARISSA HARLOWE, To Miss HOWE.

Tuesday Night, *May 16.*

MR. Lovelace has sent me, by Dorcas, his proposals, as follows:

“To spare a delicacy so extreme, and to obey you, I write: and the rather, that you may communicate this paper to Miss Howe, who may consult any of her friends you shall think proper to have intrusted on this occasion. I say, intrusted; because, as you know, I have given it out to several persons, that we are actually married.

“In the first place, Madam, I offer to settle upon you, by way of jointure, your whole estate: and moreover to vest in trustees such a part of mine in Lancashire, as shall produce a clear four hundred pounds a year, to be paid to your sole and separate use, quarterly.

“My own estate is a clear not nominal 2000 l.

per annum. Lord M. . proposes to give me possession either of that which he has in Lancashire (to which, by the way, I think I have a better title than he has himself) or that we call The Lawn in Hertfordshire, upon my nuptials with a Lady whom he so greatly admires; and to make that I shall chuse a clear 1000l. per annum.

“ My too great contempt of censure has subjected me to much slander. It may not, therefore, be improper to assure you, on the word of a gentleman, that no part of my estate was ever mortgaged: and that altho’ I lived very expensively abroad, and made large draughts, yet that midsummer-day next will discharge all that I owe in the world. My notions are not all bad ones. I have been thought, in pecuniary cases, generous. It would have deserved another name, had I not first been just.

“ If, as your own estate is at present in your father’s hands, you rather chuse that I should make a jointure out of mine, tantamount to yours, be it what it will, it shall be done. I will engage Lord M. . to write to you, what he proposes to do on the happy occasion: not as your desire or expectation, but to demonstrate, that no advantage is intended to be taken of the situation you are in with your own family

“ To show the beloved daughter the consideration I have for her, I will consent, that she shall prescribe the terms of agreement in relation to the large sums, which must be in her father’s hands, arising from her grandfather’s estate. I have no

doubt, but he will be put upon making large demands upon you. All those it shall be in your power to comply with, for the sake of your own peace. And the remainder shall be paid into your hands, and be entirely at your disposal, as a fund to support those charitable donations, which I have heard you so famed for out of your family; and for which you have been so greatly reflected upon in it.

“As to clothes, jewels, and the like, against the time you shall chuse to make your appearance, it will be my pride, that you shall not be beholden for such of those as shall be answerable to the rank of both, to those who have had the stupid folly to renounce the daughter they deserved not. You must excuse me, Madam: you would mistrust my sincerity in the rest, could I speak of these people with less asperity, though so nearly related to you.

“These, Madam, are my proposals. They are such as I always designed to make, whenever you would permit me to enter into the delightful subject. But you have been so determined to try every method for reconciling yourself to your relations, even by giving me absolutely up for ever, that you have seemed to think it but justice to keep me at a distance, till the event of that your predominant hope could be seen. It is now seen!—And altho’ I have been, and, perhaps, still am, ready to regret the want of that preference I wished for from you as Miss Clarissa Harlowe; yet I am sure, as the husband of Mrs. Lovelace, I shall be more ready

to adore than to blame you for the pangs you have given to a heart, the generosity, or rather justice of which, my implacable enemies have taught you to doubt: and this still the readier, as I am persuaded, that those pangs never would have been given by a mind so noble, had not the doubt been entertained (perhaps, with too great an appearance of reason); and as I hope I shall have it to reflect, that the moment the doubt shall be overcome, the indifference will cease.

“ I will only add, that if I have omitted any thing, that would have given you further satisfaction; or if the above terms be short of what you would wish; you will be pleased to supply them as you think fit. And when I know your pleasure, I will instantly order articles to be drawn up conformably; that nothing in my power may be wanting to make you happy.

“ You will now, dearest Madam, judge, how far all the rest depends upon yourself.”

You see, my dear, what he offers. You see it is all my fault, that he has not made these offers before. I am a strange creature!—To be to blame in every thing, and to every body; yet neither intend the ill at the time, nor know it to be the ill till too late, or so nearly too late, that I must give up all the delicacy he talks of, to compound for my fault!

I shall now judge how far all the rest depends upon myself! So coldly concludes he such warm, and, in the main, unobjectible proposals! Would you not, as you read, have supposed, that the paper would conclude with the most earnest demand

of a day? — I own, I had that expectation so strong, resulting naturally, as I may say, from the premises, that without studying for dissatisfaction, I could not help being dissatisfied when I came to the conclusion.

But you say there is no help. I must, perhaps, make further sacrifices. All delicacy it seems is to be at an end with me! — But if so, this man knows not what every wise man knows, that prudence, and virtue, and delicacy of mind in a wife, do the husband more real honor in the eye of the world, than the same qualities (were she destitute of them) in himself, do him: as the want of them in her does him more dishonor: for are not the wife's errors the husband's reproach? How justly his reproach, is another thing.

I will consider this paper; and write to it, if I am able: for it seems now, all the rest depends upon myself.

Your ever affectionate

CL. HARLOWE.

L E T T E R X X I.

Miss CLARISSA HARLOWE, To Miss HOWE.

Wednesday Morning, *May 17.*

MR. Lovelace would fain have engaged me last night. But as I was not prepared to enter upon the subject of his proposals (intending to consider them maturely) and was not highly pleased with his conclusion, I desired to be excused seeing him till morning; and the rather, as there is hardly any getting from him in any tolerable time over night.

Accordingly, about seven o'clock we met in the diningroom.

I find, he was full of expectation that I should meet him with a very favorable, who knows but with a thankful aspect? And I immediately found by his fullen countenance, that he was under no small disappointment that I did not.

My dearest love, are you well? Why look you so solemn upon me? Will your indifference never be over? If I have proposed terms in any respect short of your expectation —

I told him that he had very considerately mentioned my showing his proposals to Miss Howe; and as I should have a speedy opportunity to send them to her by Collins, I desired to suspend any talk upon that subject till I had her opinion upon them.

Good God!—If there were but the least loophole! the least room for delay!—But he was writing a letter to Lord M. . to give him an account of his situation with me, and could not finish it so satisfactorily, either to my Lord or to himself, as if I would condescend to say, whether the terms he had proposed were acceptable or not.

Thus far, I told him, I could say, that my principal point was peace and reconciliation with my relations. As to other matters, the genteelness of his own spirit would put him upon doing more for me than I should ask, or expect. Wherefore, if all he had to write about was to know what Lord M. . would do on my account, he might spare himself the trouble; for that my utmost wishes, as to myself, were much more easily gratified than he, perhaps, imagined.

He asked me then, If I would so far permit him to touch upon the happy day, as to request the presence of Lord M. . on the occasion, and to be my father.

Father had a sweet and venerable sound with it, I said. I should be glad to have a father who would own me!

Was not this plain speaking, think you, my dear? Yet it rather, I must own, appears so to me on reflection, than was designed freely at the time. For I then, with a sigh from the bottom of my heart, thought of my own father; bitterly regretting, that I am an outcast from him and from my mother.

Mr. Lovelace I thought seemed a little affected,
at

at the manner of my speaking, and, perhaps, at the sad reflection.

I am but a very young creature, Mr. Lovelace, said I (and wiped my eyes as I turned away my face) altho' you have kindly, and in love to me, introduced so much sorrow to me already: so you must not wonder, that the word father strikes so sensibly upon the heart of a child ever dutiful till she knew you, and whose tender years still require the paternal wing.

He turned towards the window (rejoice with me, my dear, since I seem to be devoted to him, that the man is not absolutely impenetrable!) his emotion was visible; yet he endeavoured to suppress it. Approaching me again; again he was obliged to turn from me. Angelic something, he said: but then obtaining a heart more suitable to his wish, he once more approached me.—For his own part, he said, as Lord M. . was so subject to the gout, he was afraid, that the compliment he had just proposed to make him, might, if made, occasion a longer suspension than he could bear to think of: and if it did, it would vex him to the heart that he had made it.

I could not say a single word to this, you know, my dear. But you will guess at my thoughts of what he said—So much passionate love, lip-deep! So prudent, and so dutifully patient at heart to a relation he had till now so undutifully despised! —Why, why, am I thrown upon such a man, thought I!

He hesitated, as if contending with himself; and

after taking a turn or two about the room, He was at a great loss what to determine upon, he said, because he had not the honor of knowing when he was to be made the happiest of men—Would to God it might that very instant be resolved upon!

He stopped a moment or two, staring in his usual confident way, in my downcast face (did I not, O my beloved friend, think you, want a father or a mother just then?) but if he could not, so soon as he wished, procure my consent to a day; in that case, he thought the compliment might as well be made to Lord M.. as not—(see, my dear!) since the settlements might be drawn and engrossed in the intervenient time, which would pacify his impatience, as no time would be lost.

You will suppose how I was affected by this speech, by repeating the substance of what he said upon it; as follows.

—But, by his soul, he knew not, so much was I upon the reserve, and so much latent meaning did my eye import, whether, when he most hoped to please me, he was not farthest from doing so. Would I vouchsafe to say, whether I approved of his compliment to Lord M.. or not?

To leave it to me, to chuse whether the speedy day he ought to have urged for with earnestness, should be accelerated or suspended!—Miss Howe, thought I, at that moment, says, I must not run away from this man!

To be sure, Mr. Lovelace, if this matter be ever to be, it must be agreeable to me to have the full

approbation of one side, since I cannot have that of the other.

If this matter be ever to be! Good God! what words are these at this time of day! And full approbation of one side! Why that word approbation? When the greatest pride of all my family is, that of having the honor of so dear a creature for their relation? Would to Heaven, my dearest life, added he, that without complimenting any body, to morrow might be the happiest day of my life!—What say you, my angel? With a trembling impatience, that seemed not affected — What say you for to morrow?

It was likely, my dear, I could say much to it, or name another day, had I been disposed to the latter with such a hinted delay from him.

I was silent.

Next day, Madam, if not to morrow? —

Had he given me time to answer, it could not have been in the affirmative, you must think—But in the same breath, he went on—Or the day after that?—And taking both my hands in his, he stared me into a half-confusion—Would you have had patience with him, my dear?

No no, said I, as calmly as possible, you cannot think, that I should imagine there can be reason for such a hurry. It will be most agreeable, to be sure, for my Lord to be present.

I am all obedience and resignation, returned the wretch, with a self-pluming air, as if he had acquiesced to a proposal made by me, and had complimented me with a great piece of self-denial.

Is it not plain, my dear, that he designs to vex and tease me? Proud, yet mean, and foolish man, if so! — But you say all punctilio is at an end with me. Why, why, will he take pains to make a heart wrap itself up in reserve, that wishes only, and that for his sake as well as my own, to observe due decorum?

Modesty, I think, required of me, that it should pass as he had put: did it not? — I think it did. Would to Heaven — but what signifies wishing?

But when he would have rewarded himself, as he had, heretofore, called it, for his self-supposed concession, with a kiss, I repulsed him with a just and very sincere disdain.

He seemed both vexed and surprised, as one who had made the most agreeable proposals and concessions, and thought them ungratefully returned. He plainly said, that he thought our situation would entitle him to such an innocent freedom: and he was both amazed and grieved to be thus scornfully repulsed.

No reply could be made by me on such a subject. I abruptly broke from him. I recollect, as I passed by one of the pier-glasses, that I saw in it his clenched hand offered in wrath to his forehead: the words, “Indifference, by his soul next to hatred,” I heard him speak: and something of ice he mentioned: I heard not what.

Whether he intends to write to my Lord, or to Miss Montague, I cannot tell. But as all delicacy ought to be over with me now, perhaps, I am to blame to expect it from a man who may not know

what it is. If he does not, and yet thinks himself very polite, and intends not to be otherwise, I am rather to be pitied, than he to be censured.

And after all, since I must take him as I find him, I must: that is to say, as a man so vain and so accustomed to be admired, that, not being conscious of internal defect, he has taken no pains to polish more than his outside: and as his proposals are higher than my expectations; and as, in his own opinion, he has a great deal to bear from me; I will (no new offence preventing) sit down to answer them:—And, if possible, in terms as unobjectible to him, as his are to me.

But after all, see you not, my dear, more and more, the mismatch that there is in our minds?

However, I am willing to compound for my fault, by giving up (if that may be all my punishment) the expectation of what is deemed happiness in this life, with such a husband as I fear he will make. In short, I will content myself to be a suffering person through the state to the end of my life.—A long one it cannot be!—

This may qualify him (as it may prove) from stings of conscience from misbehaviour to a first wife, to be a more tolerable one to a second, though not, perhaps, a better deserving one: while my story, to all who shall know it, will afford it these instructions: That the eye is a traitor, and ought ever to be mistrusted: that form is deceitful: in other words; that a fine person is seldom paired by a fine mind; and that sound principles, and a good heart, are the only

bases on which the hopes of a happy future, either with respect to this world, or the other can be built.

And so much at present for Mr. Lovelace's proposals: of which I desire your opinion.

Four letters are written by Mr. Lovelace from the date of his last, giving the state of affairs between him and the Lady, pretty much the same as in hers in the same period, allowing for the humor in his, and for his resentments expressed with vehemence on her resolution to leave him, if her friends could be brought to be reconciled to her. — A few extracts from them will be only given.

What, says he, might have become of me, and of my projects, had not her father, and the rest of the implacables, stood my friends?

After violent threatenings of revenge, he says,

'Tis plain she would have given me up for ever: nor should I have been able to prevent her abandoning of me, unless I had torn up the tree by the roots to come at the fruit; which I hope still to bring down by a gentle shake or two, if I can but have patience to stay the ripening season.

Thus triumphing in his unpolite cruelty, he says,

After her haughty treatment of me, I am resolved she shall speak out. There are a thousand beauties

to be discovered in the face, in the accent, in the bush-beating hesitations of a woman who is earnest about a subject she wants to introduce, yet knows not how. Silly fellows, calling themselves generous ones, would value themselves for sparing a Lady's confusion: but they are silly fellows indeed; and rob themselves of prodigious pleasure by their forwardness; and at the same time deprive her of displaying a world of charms, which only can be manifested on these occasions.

I'll tell thee beforehand, how it will be with my charmer in this case—She will be about it, and about it, several times: but I will not understand her: at last, after half a dozen hem—ings, she will be obliged to speak out—I think, Mr. Lovelace—I think, Sir—I think you were saying some days ago—Still I will be all silence—her eyes fixed upon my shoe-buckles, as I sit over against her—Ladies when put to it thus, always admire a man's shoe-buckles, or, perhaps, some particular beauties in the carpet. I think you said, that Mrs. Fetchville—Then a crystal tear trickles down each crimson cheek, vexed to have her virgin pride so little assisted. But, come, my meaning dear, cry I to myself, remember what I have suffered for thee, and what I have suffered by thee! Thy tearful pausings shall not be helped out by me. Speak out, love!—O the sweet confusion! Can I rob myself of so many conflicting beauties by the precipitate charmer-pitying folly, by which a politer man (thou knowest, lovely, that I am no polite man!) betrayed by his own tenderness, and unused to female tears, would have

been overcome? I will feign an irresolution of mind on the occasion, that she may not quite abhor me—that her reflections on the scene in my absence may bring to her remembrance some beauties in my part of it: an irresolution that will be owing to awe, to reverence, to profound veneration; and that will have more eloquence in it, than words can have. Speak out then, love, and spare not.

Hard-heartedness, as it is called, is an essential of the libertine's character. Familiarized to the distresses he occasions, he is seldom betrayed by tenderness into a complaisant weakness unworthy of himself.

Mentioning the settlements, he says,

I am in earnest as to the terms. If I marry her (and I have no doubt but that I shall, after my pride, my ambition, my revenge, if thou wilt, is gratified) I will do her noble justice. The more I do for such a prudent, such an excellent oeconomist, the more shall I do for myself.—But, by my soul, Belford, her haughtiness shall be brought down to own both love and obligation to me. Nor will this sketch of settlements bring us forwarder than I would have it. Modesty of sex will stand my friend at any time. At the very altar, our hands joined, I would engage to make this proud beauty leave the parson and me, and all my friends who should be present, though twenty in number, to look like fools upon one another, while she took wing, and flew out of the church-door, or window

(if that were open, and the door shut); and this only by a single word.

He mentions his rash expression, that she should be his, altho' his damnation were to be the purchase.

At that instant, says he, I was upon the point of making a violent attempt; but was checked in the very moment, and but just in time to save myself, by the awe I was struck with on again casting my eye upon her terrified but lovely face, and seeing, as I thought, her spotless heart in every line of it.

O virtue, virtue! proceeds he, what is there in thee, that can thus against his will affect the heart of a Lovelace!—Whence these involuntary tremors, and fear of giving mortal offence?—What art thou, that acting in the breast of a feeble woman, canst strike so much awe into a spirit so intrepid! Which never before, no, not in my first attempt, young as I then was, and frightened at my own boldness (till I found myself forgiven) had such an effect upon me!

He paints, in lively colors, that part of the scene between him and the Lady, where she says, “The word Father, has a sweet and venerable sound with it.”

I was exceedingly affected, says he, upon the occasion. But was ashamed to be surpris'd into such a fit of unmanly weakness—So ashamed, that I was resolv'd to subdue it at the instant, and to

guard against the like for the future. Yet, at that moment, I more than half regretted, that I could not permit her to enjoy a triumph which she so well deserved to glory in—Her youth, her beauty, her artless innocence, and her manner, equally beyond comparison or description. But her indifference, Belford!—That she could resolve to sacrifice me to the malice of my enemies; and carry on the design in so clandestine a manner—Yet love her, as I do, to phrensy!—Revere her, as I do, to adoration!—These were the recollections with which I fortified my recreant heart against her! Yet, after all, if she persevere, she must conquer!—Coward, as she has made me, that never was a coward before!

He concludes his fourth letter in a vehement rage, upon her repulsing him, when he offered to salute her; having supposed, as he owns, that she would have been all condescension on his proposals to her.

This, says he, I will for ever remember against her, in order to steel my heart, that I may cut thro' a rock of ice to hers; and repay her for the disdain, the scorn, which glowed in her countenance, and was apparent in her air, at her abrupt departure from me, after such obliging behaviour on my side, and after I had so earnestly pressed her for an early day. The women below say, She hates me; she despises me!—And 'tis true: she does; she must.—And why cannot I take their advice?—I will

not long, my fair one, be despised by thee, and laughed at by them!

Let me acquaint thee, Jack, adds he by way of postscript, that this effort of hers to leave me, if she could have been received; her sending for a coach on Sunday; no doubt, resolving not to return, if she had gone out without me (for did she not declare, that she had thoughts to retire to some of the villages about town, where she could be safe and private?) have, altogether, so much alarmed me, that I have been adding to the written instructions for my fellow and the people below, how to act in case she should elope in my absence: particularly letting Will. know what he shall report to strangers in case she shall throw herself upon any such with a resolution to abandon me. To these instructions I shall further add as circumstances offer.

LETTER XXII.

Miss HOWE, To Miss CLARISSA HARLOWE.

Thursday, *May* 18.

I HAVE neither time nor patience, my dear friend, to answer every material article in your last letters just now received. Mr. Lovelace's proposals are all I like of him. And yet (as you do) I think, that he concludes them not with that warmth and earnestness which we might naturally have expected

from him. Never in my life did I hear or read of so patient a man, with such a blessing in his reach. But wretches of his cast, between you and me, my dear, have not, I fancy, those ardors that honest men have. Who knows, as your Bell once spitefully said, but he may have half a dozen creatures to quit his hands of before he engages for life?—Yet I believe you must not expect him to be honest on this side of his grand climacteric.

He, to suggest delay from a compliment to be made to Lord M. . and to give time for settlements! He, a part of whose character it is, not to know what complaisance to his relations is—I have no patience with him! You did, indeed, want an interposing friend on the affecting occasion which you mention in yours of yesterday morning. But, upon my word, were I to have been that moment in your situation, and been so treated, I would have torn his eyes out, and left it to his own heart, when I had done, to furnish the reason for it.

Would to Heaven to morrow, without complimenting any body, might be his happy day! —— Villain! After he had himself suggested the compliment!—And I think he accuses you of delaying! Fellow, that he is!—How my heart is wrung—

But, as matters now stand betwixt you, I am very unseasonable in expressing my resentments against him.—Yet I don't know whether I am or not, neither; since it is the most cruel of fates, for a woman to be forced to have a man whom her heart despises. You must, at least, despise him; at times, however. His clenched fist offered to his

forehead on your leaving him in just displeasure — I wish it had been a pole-ax in the hands of his worst enemy.

I will endeavour to think of some method, of some scheme, to get you from him, and to fix you safely somewhere till your cousin Morden arrives — A scheme to lie by you, and to be pursued as occasion may be given. You are sure, that you can go abroad when you please? and that our correspondence is safe? I cannot, however (for the reasons heretofore mentioned respecting your own reputation) wish you to leave him while he gives you not cause to suspect his honor. But your heart I know would be the easier, if you were sure of some asylum in case of necessity.

Yet once more, I say, I can have no notion that he can or dare to mean your dishonor. But then the man is a fool, my dear — that's all.

However, since you are thrown upon a fool, marry the fool, at the first opportunity; and tho' I doubt that this man will be the most ungovernable of fools, as all witty and vain fools are, take him as a punishment, since you cannot as a reward: in short, as one given to convince you that there is nothing but imperfection in this life.

And what is the result of all I have written, but this? Either marry, my dear, or get from them all, and from him too.

You intend the latter, you'll say, as soon as you have opportunity. That, as above hinted, I hope quickly to furnish you with: and then comes on a trial between you and yourself.

These are the very fellows, that we women do not naturally hate. We don't always know what is, and what is not, in our power to do. When some principal point we have long had in view becomes so critical, that we must of necessity chuse or refuse, then perhaps we look about us; are affrighted at the wild and uncertain prospect before us; and after a few struggles and heart-achs, reject the untried new; draw in our horns, and resolve to snail on, as we did before, in a track we are acquainted with.

I shall be impatient till I have your next. I am, my dearest friend,

Your ever affectionate and faithful

ANNA HOWE.

LETTER XXIII.

Mr. BELFORD, To ROBERT LOVELACE, Esq.

Wednesday, *May* 17.

I CANNOT conceal from you any thing that relates to yourself so much as the inclosed does. You will see what the noble writer apprehends from you, and wishes of you, with regard to Miss Harlowe, and how much at heart all your relations have it that you do honorably by her. They compliment me with an influence over you, which I

wish with all my soul you would let me have in this article.

Let me once more entreat thee, Lovelace, to reflect before it be too late (before the mortal offence be given) upon the graces and merits of this Lady. Let thy frequent remorse at last end in one effectual remorse. Let not pride and wantonness of heart ruin thy fairer prospects. By my faith, Lovelace, there is nothing but vanity, conceit, and nonsense, in our wilder schemes. As we grow older, we shall be wiser, and looking back upon our foolish notions of the present hour (our youth dissipated) shall certainly despise ourselves when we think of the honorable engagements we might have made: thou, more especially, if thou lettest such a matchless creature slide through thy fingers. A creature pure from her cradle. In all her actions and sentiments uniformly noble. Strict in the performance of all her even unrewarded duties to the most unreasonable of fathers, what a wife will she make the man who shall have the honor to call her his!

What apprehensions wouldst thou have had reason for, had she been prevailed upon by giddy or frail motives, for which one man, by importunity, might prevail, as well as another?

We all know what an inventive genius thou art master of: we are all sensible, that thou hast a head to contrive, and a heart to execute. Have I not called thine the plottingest heart in the universe? I called it so upon knowledge. What wouldst thou more? Why should it be the most villanous, as well as the most able? — Marry the Lady; and,

when married, let her know what a number of contrivances thou hadst in readiness to play off. Beg of her not to hate thee for the communication; and assure her, that thou gavest them up from remorse, and in justice to her extraordinary merit; and let her have the opportunity of congratulating herself for subduing a heart so capable of what thou callest glorious mischief. This will give her room for triumph; and even thee no less: she for hers over thee; thou, for thine over thyself.

Reflect likewise upon her sufferings for thee. Actually at the time thou art forming schemes to ruin her (at least in her sense of the word) is she not laboring under a father's curse laid upon her by thy means, and for thy sake? And wouldst thou give operation and completion to that curse, which otherwise cannot have effect?

And what, Lovelace, all the time is thy pride? Thou that vainly imaginest, that the whole family of the Harlowes, and that of the Howes too, are but thy machines, unknown to themselves, to bring about thy purposes, and thy revenge; what art thou more, or better, than the instrument even of her implacable brother, and envious sister, to perpetuate the disgrace of the most excellent of sisters, to which they are moved by vilely low and sordid motives? — Canst thou bear, Lovelace, to be thought the machine of thy inveterate enemy James Harlowe? — Nay, art thou not the cully of that still viler Joseph Leman, who serves himself as much by thy money, as he does thee by the double part he acts by thy direction? — And further still, art thou not the
devil's

devil's agent, who only can, and who certainly will, suitably reward thee, if thou proceedest, and if thou effectest thy wicked purpose!

Could any man but thee put together upon paper the following questions with so much unconcern as thou seemest to have written them? — Give them a reperusal, O heart of adamant! “Whither can she fly to avoid me? Her parents will not receive her. Her uncles will not entertain her. Her beloved Norton is in their direction, and cannot. Miss Howe dare not. She has not one friend in town but me. Is entirely a stranger to the town.” — What must that heart be that can triumph in a distress so deep, into which she has been plunged by thy elaborate arts and contrivances? And what a sweet, yet sad reflection was that, which had like to have had its due effect upon thee, arising from thy naming Lord M. . for her nuptial father! Her tender years inclining her to wish a father, and to hope a friend. — O my dear Lovelace, canst thou resolve to be, instead of the father thou hast robbed her of, a devil?

Thou knowest, that I have no interest, that I can have no view, in wishing thee to do justice to this admirable creature. For thy own sake, once more I conjure thee, for thy family's sake, and for the sake of our common humanity, let me beseech thee to be just to Miss Clarissa Harlowe.

No matter whether these expostulations are in character from me, or not. I have been and am bad enough. If thou takest my advice, which is (as the inclosed will show thee) the advice of all thy

family, thou wilt, perhaps, have it to reproach me (and but perhaps neither) that thou art not a worse man than myself. But if thou dost not, and if thou ruinest such a virtue, all the complicated wickedness of ten devils, let loose among the innocent with full power over them, will not do so much vile and base mischief as thou wilt be guilty of.

It is said, that the prince on his throne is not safe, if a mind so desperate can be found, as values not its own life. So may it be said, that the most immaculate virtue is not safe, if a man can be met with, who has no regard to his own honor, and makes a jest of the most solemn vows and protestations.

Thou mayest by trick, chicane, and false colors, thou who art worse than a pickeroon in love, overcome a poor Lady so entangled as thou hast entangled her; so unprotected as thou hast made her: but consider, how much more generous and just to her, and noble to thyself, it is, to overcome thyself.

Once more, it is no matter, whether my past or future actions countenance my preachment, as, perhaps, thou'lt call what I have written: but this I promise thee, that whenever I meet with a woman of but one half of Miss Harlowe's perfections, who will favor me with her acceptance, I will take the advice I give, and marry. Nor will I offer to try her honor at the hazard of my own. In other words, I will not degrade an excellent creature in her own eyes, by trials, when I have no cause of suspicion. And let me add, with respect to thy eagleship's manifestation, of which thou boastest, in thy attempts upon the innocent and uncorrupted, rather

than upon those whom thou humorously comparest to wrens, wagtails, and phyl-tits, as thou callest them, that I hope I have it not once to reproach myself, that I ruined the morals of any one creature, who otherwise would have been uncorrupted. Guilt enough in contributing to the continued guilt of other poor wretches, if I am one of those who take care she shall never rise again, when she has once fallen.

Whatever the capital devil, under whose banner thou hast listed, will let thee do, with regard to this incomparable woman, I hope thou wilt act with honor in relation to the inclosed, between Lord M. . and me; since his Lordship, as thou wilt see, desires, that thou mayest not know he wrote on the subject; for reasons, I think, very far from being creditable to thyself: and that thou wilt take as meant, the honest zeal for thy service, of

Thy real friend,

J. BELFORD.

L E T T E R XXIV.

Lord M. ., To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

(Inclosed in the preceding.)

M. . Hall, Monday, *May* 15.

S I R,

IF any man in the world has power over my nephew, it is you. I, therefore, write this, to beg you to interfere in the affair depending between him and the most accomplished of women, as every one says; and what every one says must be true.

I don't know that he has any bad designs upon her; but I know his temper too well, not to be apprehensive upon such long delays: and the Ladies here have been for some time in fear for her: Lady Sarah in particular, who (as you must know) is a wise woman, says, that these delays, in the present case, must be from him, rather than from the Lady.

He had always, indeed, a strong antipathy to marriage, and may think of playing his dog's tricks by her, as he has by so many others. If there's any danger of this, 'tis best to prevent it in time; for, when a thing is done, advice comes too late.

He has always had the folly and impertinence to make a jest of me for using proverbs: but as they are the wisdom of whole nations and ages collected

into a small compass, I am not to be shamed out of sentences, that often contain more wisdom in them, than the tedious harangues of most of our parsons and moralists. Let him laugh at them, if he pleases: you and I know better things, Mr. Belford.—Though you have kept company with a wolf, you have not learnt to howl of him.

But nevertheless, you must not let him know that I have written to you on this subject. I am ashamed to say it; but he has ever treated me as if I were a man of very common understanding; and would, perhaps, think never the better of the best advice in the world, for coming from me.—Those, Mr. Belford, who most love, are least set by.—But who would expect velvet to be made out of a sow's ear?

I am sure he has no reason, however, to slight me as he does. He may and will be the better for me, if he outlives me; though he once told me to my face, That I might do as I pleased with my estate; for that he, for his part, loved his liberty as much as he despised money. And at another time, twitting me with my phrases,—That the man was above control, who wanted not either to borrow or flatter.—He thought, I suppose, that I could not cover him with my wings, without pecking at him with my bill; though I never used to be pecking at him, without very great occasion: and, God knows, he might have my very heart, if he would but endeavour to oblige me, by studying his own good; for that is all I desire of him. Indeed, it was his poor mother that first spoiled

him ; and I have been but too indulgent to him since. A fine grateful disposition, you'll say, to return evil for good ! But that was always his way. It is a good saying, and which was verified by him with a witness — Children when little, make their parents fools ; when great, mad. — Had his parents lived to see what I have seen of him, they would have been mad indeed.

This match, however, as the Lady has such an extraordinary share of wisdom and goodness, might set all to rights ; and if you can forward it, I would enable him to make whatever settlements he could wish ; and should not be unwilling to put him in possession of another pretty estate besides. I am no covetous man, he knows. And indeed, what is a covetous man to be likened to so fitly, as to a dog in a wheel which roasts meat for others ? And what do I live for (as I have often said) but to see him and my two nieces well married and settled ? May Heaven settle him down to a better mind, and turn his heart to more of goodness and consideration !

If the delays are on his side, I tremble for the Lady ; and, if on hers (as he tells my niece Charlotte) I could wish she were apprised that delays are dangerous. Excellent as she is, she ought not to depend on her merits with such a changeable fellow, and such a professed marriage-hater, as he has been. Desert and reward, I can assure her, seldom keep company together.

But let him remember, that Vengeance though it comes with leaden feet, strikes with iron hands. If

he behaves ill in this case, he may find it so. What a pity it is, that a man of his talents and learning should be so vile a rake! Alas! alas! *Une poignée de bonne vie vaut mieux que plein muy de clergé*; a handful of good life is better than a whole bushel of learning.

You may throw in, too, as a friend, that, should he provoke me, it may not be too late for me to marry. My old friend Wycherly did so, when he was older than I am, on purpose to plague his nephew: and, in spite of this gout, I might have a child or two still. I have not been without some thoughts that way, when he has angered me more than ordinary: but these thoughts have gone off again hitherto, upon my considering, that the children of very young and very old men (though I am not so very old neither) last not long; and that old men when they marry young women, are said to make much of death: yet who knows but that matrimony might be good against the gouty humors I am troubled with?

No man is every thing—You, Mr. Belford, are a learned man. I am a Peer. And do you (as you best know how) inculcate upon him the force of these wise sayings which follow, as well as those which went before; but yet so discreetly, as that he may not know, that you borrow your darts from my quiver. These be they—Happy is the man who knows his follies in his youth. He that lives well, lives long. Again, He that lives ill one year, will sorrow for it seven. And again, as the Spaniards have it—Who lives well, sees afar off! Far off

indeed; for he sees into eternity, as a man may say. Then that other fine saying, He who perishes in needless dangers, is the devil's martyr. Another proverb I picked up at Madrid, when I accompanied Lord Lexington in his embassy to Spain, which might teach our nephew more mercy and compassion than is in his nature I doubt to show; which is this, That he who pities another, remembers himself. And this that is going to follow, I am sure he has proved the truth of a hundred times, That he who does what he will, seldom does what he ought. Nor is that unworthy of his notice, Young men's frolicks, old men feel. My devilish gout, God help me— But I will not say what I was going to say.

I remember, that you yourself, complimenting me for my taste in pithy and wise sentences, said a thing that gave me a high opinion of you; and it was this: "Men of talents, said you, are sooner to be convinced by short sentences than by long preachments, because the short sentences drive themselves into the heart, and stay there, while long discourses, though ever so good, tire the attention; and one good thing drives out another, and so on, till all is forgotten."

May your good counsels, Mr. Belford, founded upon these hints which I have given, pierce his heart, and incite him to do what will be so happy for himself, and so necessary for the honor of that admirable Lady whom I long to see his wife; and, if I may, I will not think of one for myself.

Should he abuse the confidence she has placed in

him, I myself shall pray, that vengeance may fall upon his head — *Raro* — I quite forget all my Latin, but I think it is, *Raro antecedentem scelestum deseruit pede pœna claudo*: where vice goes before, vengeance (sooner or later) will follow. But why do I translate these things for you?

I shall make no apologies for this trouble. I know how well you love him and me; and there is nothing in which you could serve us both more importantly, than in forwarding this match to the utmost of your power. When it is done, how shall I rejoice to see you at M. . Hall! Mean time, I shall long to hear that you are likely to be successful with him; and am,

Dear Sir,

Your most faithful friend and servant,

M. .

Mr. Lovelace having not returned an answer to Mr. Belford's expostulatory letter, so soon as Mr. Belford expected, he wrote to him expressing his apprehension, that he had disobliged him by his honest freedom. Among other things he says —

I pass my time here at Watford, attending my dying uncle, very heavily. I cannot, therefore, by any means, dispense with thy correspondence. And why shouldst thou punish me, for having more

conscience and more remorse than thyself? Thou, who never thoughtest either conscience or remorse an honor to thee. And I have, besides, a melancholy story to tell thee, in relation to Belton and his Thomafine; and which may afford a lesson to all the keeping class.

I have a letter from each of our three companions in the time. They have all the wickedness that thou hast, but not the wit. Some new rogueries do two of them boast of, which, I think, if completed, deserve the gallows.

I am far from hating intrigue upon principle. But to have awkward fellows plot, and commit their plots to paper, destitute of the seasonings, of the acumen, which is thy talent, how extremely shocking must their letters be! — But do thou, Lovelace, whether thou art, or art not, determined upon thy measures with regard to the fine Lady in thy power, enliven my heavy heart by thy communications; and thou wilt oblige

Thy melancholy friend,

J. BELFORD.

LETTER XXV.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

Friday Night, *May* 19.

WHEN I have opened my views to thee so amply as I have done in my former letters; and have told thee, that my principal design is but to bring virtue to a trial; that, if virtue, it need not be afraid of; and that the reward of it will be marriage (that is to say, if, after I have carried my point, I cannot prevail upon her to live with me the life of honor; for that thou knowest is the wish of my heart); I am amazed at the repetition of thy wambling nonsense.

I am of opinion with thee, that some time hence, when I am grown wiser, I shall conclude, that there is nothing but vanity, conceit, and nonsense, in my present wild schemes. But what is this saying, but that I must be first wiser?

I do not intend to let this matchless creature slide through my fingers.

Art thou able to say half the things in her praise, that I have said, and am continually saying or writing?

Her gloomy father cursed the poor creature, because she put it out of his wicked power to compel her to have the man she hated. Thou knowest how little merit she has with me on this score.—And shall I not try the virtue I intend,

upon full proof, to reward, because her father is a tyrant? — Why art thou thus eternally reflecting upon so excellent a woman, as if thou wert assured she would fail in the trial? — Nay, thou declarest, every time thou writest on the subject, that she will, that she must yield, entangled as she is: and yet makest her virtue the pretence of thy solicitude for her.

An instrument of the vile James Harlowe, dost thou call me? — O Jack! how I could curse thee! — I an instrument of that brother! of that sister! — But mark the end — And thou shalt see what will become of that brother, and of that sister!

Play not against me my own acknowledged sensibilities, I desire thee. Sensibilities, which at the same time that they contradict thy charge of an adamant heart in thy friend, thou hadst known nothing of, had I not communicated them to thee.

If I ruin such a virtue, sayest thou! — Eternal monotonist! — Again; “the most immaculate virtue may be ruined by men who have no regard to their honor, and who make a jest of the most solemn oaths, &c.” What must be the virtue that will be ruined without oaths? Is not the world full of these deceptions? And are not lovers’ oaths a jest of hundreds of years standing? And are not cautions against the perfidy of our sex, a necessary part of the female education?

I do intend to endeavour to overcome myself; but I must first try, if I cannot overcome this Lady. Have I not said, that the honor of her sex is concerned that I should try?

Whenever thou meetest with a woman of but half her perfections, thou wilt marry — Do, Jack.

Can a girl be degraded by trials, who is not overcome?

I am glad that thou takest crime to thyself, for not endeavouring to convert the poor wretches whom others have ruined. I will not recriminate upon thee, Belford, as I might, when thou flatterest thyself, that thou never ruinedst the morals of any young creature, who otherwise would not have been corrupted — The palliating consolation of an Hottentot heart, determined rather to gluttonize on the garbage of other foul feeders, than to reform. — But tell me, Jack, wouldst thou have spared such a girl as my Rosebud, had I not, by my example, engaged thy generosity? Nor was my Rosebud the only girl I spared: — When my power was acknowledged, who more merciful than thy friend?

It is resistance that inflames desire,
Sharpens the darts of Love, and blows its fire.
Love is disarm'd that meets with too much ease;
He languishes, and does not care to please.

The women know this as well as the men. They love to be addressed with spirit;

And therefore 'tis their golden fruit they guard
With so much care, to make possession hard,

Whence, for a by-reflection, the ardent, the complaisant gallant is so often preferred to the cold, the unadoring husband. And yet the sex do not consider, that variety and novelty give the ardor and the obsequiousness; and that, were the rake as much used to them as the husband is, he would be (and is to his own wife, if married) as indifferent to their favors, as their husbands are, and the husband, in his turn, would, to another woman, be the rake. Let the women, upon the whole, take this lesson from a Lovelace — “Always to endeavour to make themselves as new to a husband, and to appear as elegant and as obliging to him, as they are desirous to appear to a lover, and actually were to him as such; and then the rake, which all women love, will last longer in the husband, than it generally does.”

But to return: — If I have not sufficiently cleared my conduct to thee in the above; I refer thee once more to mine of the 13th of last month. And pr'ythee, Jack, lay me not under a necessity to repeat the same things so often. I hope thou readest what I write more than once.

I am not displeased that thou art so apprehensive of my resentment, that I cannot miss a day, without making thee uneasy. Thy conscience, 'tis plain, tells thee, that thou hast deserved my displeasure: and if it has convinced thee of that, it will make thee afraid of repeating thy fault. See that this be the consequence. Else, now that thou hast told me how I can punish thee, it is very likely that I do punish thee by my silence, altho' I have as much

pleasure in writing on this charming subject, as thou canst have in reading what I write.

When a boy, if a dog ran away from me through fear, I generally looked about for a stone, or a stick; and if neither offered to my hand, I skimmed my hat after him to make him afraid for something. What signifies power, if we do not exert it?

Let my Lord know that thou hast scribbled to me. But give him not the contents of thy epistle. Though a parcel of crude stuff, he would think there was something in it. Poor arguments will do, when brought in favor of what we like. But the stupid Peer little thinks that this Lady is a rebel to love. On the contrary, not only he, but all the world believe her to be a volunteer in his service. — So I shall incur blame, and she will be pitied, if any thing happen amiss.

Since my Lord's heart is so set upon this match, I have written already to let him know, "That my unhappy character has given my beloved an ungenerous diffidence of me. That she is so mother-fick and father-fond, that she had rather return to Harlowe-place, than marry. That she is even apprehensive, that the step she has taken of going off with me, will make the Ladies of a family of such rank and honor as ours, think slightly of her. That, therefore, I desire his Lordship (though this hint, I tell him, must be very delicately touched) to write me such a letter as I can show her (let him treat me in it ever so freely, I shall not take it amiss, I tell him, because I know his Lordship

takes pleasure in writing to me in a corrective style). That he may make what offers he pleases on the marriage. That I desire his presence at the ceremony; that I may take from his hand the greatest blessing that mortal man can give me."

I have not absolutely told the Lady that I would write to his Lordship to this effect; yet have given her reason to think I will. So that without the last necessity I shall not produce the answer I expect from him. For I am very loth, I own, to make use of any of my family's names for the furthering of my designs. And yet I must make all secure, before I pull off the mask. Was not this my motive for bringing her hither?

Thus thou seest, that the old Peer's letter came very seasonably. I thank thee for it. But as to his sentences, they cannot possibly do me good. I was early suffocated with his wisdom of nations. When a boy, I never asked any thing of him, but outflow a proverb; and if the tendency of that was to deny me, I never could obtain the least favor. This gave me so great an aversion to the very word, that, when a child, I made it a condition with my tutor, who was an honest parson, that I would not read my bible at all, if he would not excuse me one of the wisest books in it: to which, however, I had no other objection, than that it was called the proverbs. And as for Solomon, he was then a hated character with me, not because of his polygamy, but because I had conceived him to be such another musty old fellow as my uncle.

Well

Well but let us leave old saws to old men.— What signifies thy tedious whining over thy departing relation? Is it not generally agreed, that he cannot recover? Will it not be kind in thee to put him out of his misery? I hear, that he is pestered still with visits from doctors and apothecaries, and surgeons; that they cannot cut so deep as the mortification has gone; and that in every visit, in every scarification, inevitable death is pronounced upon him. Why then do they keep tormenting him? Is it not to take away more of his living fleece than of his dead flesh?— When a man is given over, the fee should surely be refused. Are they not now robbing his heirs?— What hast thou to do, if the Will be as thou’dst have it?— He sent for thee (did he not?) to close his eyes. He is but an uncle, is he?

Let me see, if I mistake not, it is in the Bible, or some other good book: can it be in Herodotus?— O I believe it is in Josephus; a half-sacred, and half-profane author. He tells us of a king of Syria, put out of his pain by his prime minister, or one who deserved to be so for his contrivance. The story says, if I am right, that he spread a wet cloth over his face, which killing him, he reigned in his place. A notable fellow! Perhaps this wet cloth in the original, is what we now call Laudanum; a potion that overspreads the faculties, as the wet cloth did the face of the royal patient; and the translator knew not how to render it.

But how like a forlorn varlet thou subscribest,
“Thy melancholy friend, J. Belford!” Melancholy!

for what? To stand by, and see fair play between an old man and death? I thought thou hadst been more of a man; thou that art not afraid of an acute death, a sword's point, to be so plaguily hyped at the consequences of a chronical one!—What though the scarificators work upon him day by day? It is only upon a *caput mortuum*: and pr'ythee go to, to use the *stylum veterum*, and learn of the Royal Butchers; who for sport (a hundred times worse men than thy Lovelace) widow ten thousand at a brush, and make twice as many fatherless—Learn of them, I say, how to support a single death.

But art thou sure, Jack, it is a mortification?—My uncle once gave promises of such a root-and-branch distemper: but alas! it turned to a smart gout-fit; and I had the mortification instead of him—I have heard that Bark in proper doses will arrest a mortification in its progress, and at last cure it. Let thy uncle's surgeon know, that it is worth more than his ears, if he prescribe one grain of the Bark.

I wish my uncle had given me the opportunity of setting thee a better example: thou shouldst have seen what a brave fellow I had been. And had I had occasion to write, my conclusion would have been this: "I hope the old Trojan's happy. In that hope, I am so; and am

Thy rejoicing friend,

R. LOVELACE."

Dwell not always, Jack, upon one subject. Let me have poor Belton's story. The sooner the better. If I can be of service to him, tell him he may command me either in purse or person. Yet the former with a freer will than the latter, for how can I leave my goddess? But I'll issue my commands to my other vassals to attend thy summons.

If ye want head, let me know. If not, my quota, on this occasion, is money.

LETTER XXVI.

Mr. BELFORD, To ROBERT LOVELACE, Esq.

Saturday, *May* 20.

NOT one word will I reply to such an abandoned wretch, as thou hast shown thyself to be in thine of last night. I will leave the Lady to the protection of that power who only can work miracles; and to her own merits. Still I have hopes that these will save her.

I will proceed, as thou desirest, to poor Belton's case; and the rather, as it has thrown me into such a train of thinking upon our past lives, our present courses, and our future views, as may be of service to both, if I can give due weight to the reflections that arise from it.

The poor man made me a visit on Thursday, in this my melancholy attendance. He began with

complaints of his ill health and spirits, his hectic cough, and his encreased malady of spitting of blood; and then led to his story.

A confounded one it is; and which highly aggravates his other maladies: for it has come out, that his Thomazine (who, truly, would be new christened, you know, that her name may be nearer in found to the christian name of the man whom she pretended to dote upon) has for many years carried on an intrigue with a fellow who had been hostler to her father (an innkeeper at Darking); of whom, at the expence of poor Belton, she has made a gentleman; and managed it so, that having the art to make herself his cashier, she has been unable to account for large sums, which he thought forthcoming at demand, and had trusted to her custody, in order to pay of a mortgage upon his paternal estate in Kent, which his heart had run upon leaving clear; but which cannot now be done, and will soon be foreclosed. And yet she has so long passed for his wife, that he knows not what to resolve upon about her; nor about the two boys he was so fond of, supposing them to be his; whereas now he begins to doubt his share in them.

So keeping don't do, Lovelace. 'Tis not the eligible life. "A man may keep a woman, said the poor fellow to me, but not his estate! — Two interests! — Then, my tottering fabric!" pointing to his emaciated carcass.

We do well to value ourselves upon our liberty, or, to speak more properly, upon the liberties we take! We had need to run down matrimony as we

do, and to make that state the subject of our frothy jests; when we frequently render ourselves (for this of Tom's is not a singular case) the dupes and tools of women who generally govern us (by arts our wise heads penetrate not) more absolutely than a wife would attempt to do.

Let us consider this point a little; and that upon our own principles, as libertines, setting aside what is exacted from us by the laws of our country, and its customs; which, nevertheless, we cannot get over, till we have got over almost all moral obligations, as members of society.

In the first place, let us consider (we, who are in possession of estates by legal descent) how we should have liked to have been such naked destitute varlets, as we must have been, had our fathers been as wise as ourselves; and despised matrimony as we do—And then let us ask ourselves, If we ought not to have the same regard for our posterity, as we are glad our fathers had for theirs?

But this, perhaps, is too moral a consideration.—To proceed, therefore, to those considerations which will be more striking to us: how can we reasonably expect oeconomy or frugality (or any thing indeed but riot and waste) from creatures who have an interest, and must, therefore, have views, different from our own?

They know the uncertain tenure (our fickle humors) by which they hold: and is it to be wondered at, supposing them to be provident harlots, that they should endeavour, if they have the power, to lay up against a rainy day? or, if they have not

the power, that they should squander all they can come at, when they are sure of nothing but the present hour; and when the life they live, and the sacrifices they have made, put conscience and honor out of the question?

Whereas a wife having the same family interest with her husband, lies not under either the same apprehensions or temptations; and has not broken through (of necessity, at least, has not) those restraints which education has fastened upon her: and if she make a private purse, which we are told by anti-matrimonialists all wives love to do, and has children, it goes all into the same family at the long run.

Then, as to the great article of fidelity to your bed, are not women of family, who are well educated, under greater restraints, than creatures, who, if they ever had reputation, sacrifice it to sordid interest, or to more sordid appetite, the moment they give up to you? Does not the example you furnish, of having succeeded with her, give encouragement for others to attempt her likewise? For, with all her blandishments, can any man be so credulous, or so vain, as to believe, that the woman he could persuade, another may not prevail upon?

Adultery is so capital a guilt, that even rakes and libertines, if not wholly abandoned, and, as I may say, invited by a woman's levity, disavow and condemn it: but here, in a state of keeping, a woman is in no danger of incurring (legally, at least) that guilt; and you yourself have broken through and overthrown in her all the fences and boundaries of

moral honesty, and the modesty and reserves of her sex: and what tie shall hold her against inclination, or interest? And what shall deter an attempter?

While a husband has this security from legal sanctions, that if his wife be detected in a criminal conversation with a man of fortune (the most likely by bribes to seduce her) he may recover very great damages, and procure a divorce besides: which, to say nothing of the ignominy, is a consideration that must have some force upon both parties. And a wife must be vicious indeed, and a reflection upon a man's own choice, who, for the sake of change, and where there are no qualities to seduce, nor affluence to corrupt, will run so many hazards to injure her husband in the tenderest of all points.

But there are difficulties in procuring a divorce (and so there ought) — and none, says the rake, in parting with a mistress whenever you suspect her; or whenever you are weary of her, and have a mind to change her for another.

But must not the man be a brute indeed, who can cast off a woman whom he has seduced (if he take her from the town, that's another thing) without some flagrant reason; something that will better justify him to himself, as well as to her, and to the world, than mere power and novelty?

But I don't see, if we judge by fact, and by the practice of all we have been acquainted with of the Keeping Class, that we know how to part with them when we have them.

That we know we can if we will, is all we have for it: and this leads us to bear many things from a mistress which we would not from a wife. But, if we are good-natured and humane: if the woman has art (and what woman wants it, who has fallen by art? and to whose precarious situation art is so necessary?) If you have given her the credit of being called by your name: if you have a settled place of abode, and have received and paid visits in her company, as your wife: if she has brought you children—You will allow, that these are strong obligations upon you, in the world's eye, as well as to your own heart, against tearing yourself from such close connexions. She will stick to you as your skin: and it will be next to flaying of yourself to cast her off.

Even if there be cause for it, by infidelity, she will have managed ill, if she have not her defenders. Nor did I ever know a cause or a person so bad, as to want advocates, either from ill will to the one, or pity to the other: and you will then be thought a hard-hearted miscreant: and even were she to go off without credit to herself, she will leave you as little; especially with all those whose good opinion a man would wish to cultivate.

Well, then, shall this poor privilege, that we may part with a woman if we will, be deemed a balance for the other inconveniences? Shall it be thought by us, who are men of family and fortune, an equivalent for giving up equality of degree; and taking for the partner of our bed, and very probably more than the partner in our estates (to the breach of all family-rule

and order) a low-born, a low-educated creature, who has not brought any thing into the common stock; and can possibly make no returns for the solid benefits she receives, but those libidinous ones, which a man cannot boast of, but to his disgrace, nor think of, but to the shame of both?

Moreover, as the man advances in years, the fury of his libertinism will go off. He will have different aims and pursuits, which will diminish his appetite to ranging, and make such a regular life as the matrimonial and family-life, palatable to him, and every day more palatable.

If he has children, and has reason to think them his, and if his lewd courses have left him any estate, he will have cause to regret the restraint his boasted liberty has laid him under, and the valuable privilege it has deprived him of; when he finds, that it must descend to some relation, for whom, whether near or distant, he cares not one farthing; and who, perhaps (if a man of virtue) has held him in the utmost contempt for his dissolute life.

And were we to suppose his estate in his power to bequeath as he pleases; why should a man resolve, for the gratifying of his foolish humor only, to bastardize his race? Why should he wish to expose his children to the scorn and insults of the rest of the world? Why should he, whether they are sons or daughters, lay them under the necessity of complying with proposals of marriage, either inferior as to fortune, or unequal as to age? Why should he deprive the children he loves, who themselves may be guilty of no fault, of the respect they would wish to have, and to deserve;

and of the opportunity of associating themselves with proper, that is to say, with reputable company? And why should he make them think themselves under obligation to every person of character, who will vouchsafe to visit them? What little reason, in a word, would such children have to bless their father's obstinate defiance of the laws and customs of his country; and for giving them a mother, of whom they could not think with honor; to whose crime it was, that they owed their very beings, and whose example it was their duty to shun?

If the education and morals of these children are left to chance, as too generally they are (for the man who has humanity and a feeling heart, and who is capable of fondness for his offspring, I take it for granted, will marry); the case is still worse; his crime is perpetuated, as I may say, by his children: and the sea, the army, perhaps the highway, for the boys; the common for the girls; too often point out the way to a worse catastrophe.

What, therefore, upon the whole, do we get by treading in these crooked paths, but danger, disgrace, and a too late repentance?

And after all, do we not frequently become the cullies of our own libertinism; sliding into the very state with those half-worn-out doxies, which perhaps we might have entered into with their Ladies; at least with their superiors both in degree and fortune? And all the time, lived handsomely like ourselves; not sneaking into holes and corners; and, when we crept abroad with our women, looking

about us, and at every one that passed us, as if we were confessedly accountable to the censures of all honest people.

My cousin Tony Jenyns, thou knewest. He had not the actively mischievous spirit, that thou, Belton, Mowbray, Tourville, and myself, have: but he imbibed the same notions we do, and carried them into practice.

How did he prate against wedlock! How did he strut about as a wit and a smart! And what a wit and a smart did all the boys and girls of our family (myself among the rest, then an urchin) think him, for the airs he gave himself? — “Marry! No, not for the world; what man of sense would bear the insolences, the petulances, the expensiveness of a wife! He could not for the heart of him think it tolerable, that a woman of equal rank and fortune, and, as it might happen, superior talents to his own, should look upon herself to have a right to share the benefit of that fortune which she brought him.”

So, after he had fluttered about the town for two or three years, in all which time he had a better opinion of himself than any body else had, what does he do, but enter upon an affair with his fencingmaster’s daughter?

He succeeds; takes private lodgings for her at Hackney; visits her by stealth; both of them tender of reputations that were extremely tender, but which neither had quite given up; for rakes of either sex are always the last to condemn or cry down themselves: visited by nobody, nor visiting:

the life of a thief, or of a man beset by creditors, afraid to look out of his own house, or to be seen abroad with her. And thus went he on for twelve years, and, though he had a good estate, hardly making both ends meet; for, though no glare, there was no œconomy; and besides, he had every year a child, and very fond of his children was he. But none of them lived above three years: and being now, on the death of the doventh, grown as dully sober, as if he had been a real husband, his good Mrs. Thomas (for he had not permitted her to take his own name) prevailed upon him to think the loss of their children a judgment upon the parents for their wicked way of life (a time will come, Lovelace, if we live to advanced years, in which reflection will take hold of the enfeebled mind); and then it was not difficult for his woman to induce him, by way of compounding with heaven, to marry her. When this was done, he had leisure to sit down, and contemplate; and to recollect the many offers of persons of family and fortune which he had declined in the prime of life: his expenses equal at least: his reputation not only less, but lost: his enjoyments stolen: his partnership unequal, and such as he had always been ashamed of. But the women said, that after twelve or thirteen years cohabitation, Tony did an honest thing by her. And that was all my poor cousin got by making his old mistress his new wife — Not a drum, not a trumpet, not a fife, not a tabret, nor the expectation of a new joy, to animate him on!

What Belton will do with his Thomafine, I know not; nor care I to advise him: for I fee the poor fellow does not like that any body should curse her but himself. This he does very heartily. And fo low is he reduced, that he blubbers over the reflection upon his past fondness for her cubs, and upon his present doubts of their being his: “What a damn’d thing is it, Belford, if Tom and Hal should be the hostler dog’s puppies, and not mine!”

Very true! and I think the strong health of the chubby-faced muscular whelps confirms the too great probability. But I say not so to him.

You, he says, are such a gay, lively mortal, that this sad tale would make no impresson upon you: especially now, that your whole heart is engaged as it is. Mowbray would be too violent upon it: he has not, he says, a feeling heart. Tourville has no discretion: and, a pretty jest! although he and his Thomafine lived without reputation in the world (people gueffing that they were not married, notwithstanding she went by his name) yet “he would not too much discredit the cursed ingrate neither!”

Could a man act a weaker part, had he been really married; and were he sure he was going to separate from the mother of his own children?

I leave this as a lesson upon thy heart, without making any application: only, with this remark, “That after we libertines have indulged our licentious appetites, reflecting (in the conceit of our vain hearts) both with our lips and by our lives, upon our ancestors, and the good old ways, we find

out, when we come to years of discretion, if we live till then (what all who knew us found out before, that is to say;) we find out our own despicable folly; that those good old ways would have been best for us, as well as for the rest of the world; and that in every step we have deviated from them, we have only exposed our vanity, and our ignorance at the same time. ”

J. BELFORD.

L E T T E R X X V I I .

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

Saturday, *May* 20.

I AM pleased with the sober reflection with which thou concludest thy last; and I thank thee for it.

Poor Belton! — I did not think his Thomazine, would have proved so very a devil. But this must everlastingly be the risks of a keeper, who takes up with a low-bred girl. This I never did. Nor had I occasion to do it. Such a one as I, Jack, needed only, till now, to shake the stateliest tree, and the mellowed fruit dropt into my mouth: always of Montaigne's taste, thou knowest, thought it a glory to subdue a girl of family. — More truly delightful to me the seduction-progress than the crowning act: for that's a vapor, a bubble! And most

cordially do I thank thee for thy indirect hint, that I am right in my present pursuit.

From such a woman as Miss Harlowe, a man is secured from all the inconveniences thou expatiatest upon.

Once more, therefore, do I thank thee, Belford, for thy approbation! — A man need not, as thou sayest, sneak into holes and corners, and shun the day, in the company of such a woman as this. How friendly in thee, thus to abet thee favorite purpose of my heart! — Nor can it be a disgrace to me, to permit such a Lady to be called by my name! — Nor shall I be at all concerned about the world's censure, if I live to the years of discretion, which thou mentionest, should I be taken in, and prevailed upon to tread with her the good old path of my ancestors.

A blessing on thy heart, thou honest fellow! I thought thou wert in jest, and but acquitting thyself of an engagement to Lord M., when thou wert pleading for matrimony in behalf of this Lady! — It could not be principle, I knew, in thee: it could not be compassion — A little envy indeed I suspected! — But now I see thee once more thyself: and once more, say I, A blessing on thy heart, thou true friend, and very honest fellow!

Now will I proceed with courage in all my schemes, and oblige thee with the continued narrative of my progressions towards bringing them to effect! — But I could not forbear to interrupt my story, to show my gratitude.

LETTER XXVIII.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

AND now will I favor thee with a brief account of our present situation.

From the highest to the lowest we are all extremely happy. — Dorcas stands well in her Lady's graces. Polly has asked her advice in relation to a courtship-affair of her own. No oracle ever gave better. Sally has had a quarrel with her Woollen-draper; and made my charmer Lady-chancellor in it. She blamed Sally for behaving tyrannically to a man who loves her. Dear creature! to stand against a glass, and to shut her eyes because she will not see her face in it! — Mrs. Sinclair has paid her court to so unerring a judge, by requesting her advice with regard to both nieces.

This the way we have been in for several days with the people below. Yet sola generally at her meals, and seldom at other times in their company. They now, used to her ways (perseverance must conquer) never press her; so when they meet, all is civility on both sides. Even married people, I believe, Jack, prevent abundance of quarrels, by seeing one another but seldom.

But how stands it between thyself and the Lady, methinks thou askest, since her abrupt departure from thee, and undutiful repulse of Wednesday morning?

Why,

Why, pretty well in the main. Nay, very well. For why? The dear saucy-face knows not how to help herself. Can fly to no other protection. And has, besides, overheard a conversation (who would have thought she had been so near?) which passed between Mrs. Sinclair, Miss Martin, and myself, that very Wednesday afternoon; which has set her heart at ease with respect to several doubtful points.

Such as, particularly, "Mrs. Fetchville's unhappy state of mind — Most humanely pitied by Miss Martin, who knows her very well — The husband she has lost, and herself, (as Sally says) lovers from their cradles. Pity from one begets pity from another, be the occasion for it either strong or weak; and so many circumstances were given to poor Mrs. Fetchville's distress, that it was impossible but my beloved must extremely pity her whom the less tender-hearted Miss Martin greatly pitied.

"My Lord M..s gout his only hindrance from visiting my spouse. Lady Betty and Miss Montague soon expected in town.

"My earnest desire signified to have my spouse receive those Ladies in her own house, if Mrs. Fetchville would but know her own mind; and I pathetically lamented the delay occasioned by her not knowing it.

"My intention to stay at Mrs. Sinclair's, as I said I had told them before, while my spouse resides in her own house (when Mrs. Fetchville could be brought to quit it) in order to gratify her utmost punctilio.

"My passion for my beloved (which as I told them

in a high and fervent accent, was the truest that man could have for woman) I boasted of. It was, in short, I said, of the true Platonic kind; or I had no notion of what Platonic love was."

So it is, Jack; and must end as Platonic love generally does end.

"Sally and Mrs. Sinclair next praised, but not grossly, my beloved. Sally particularly admired her purity; called it exemplary; yet (to avoid suspicion) expressed her thoughts, that she was rather over-nice, if she might presume to say so before me. But nevertheless she applauded me for the strict observation I made of my vow.

"I more freely blamed her reserves to me; called her cruel; inveighed against her relations; doubted her love. Every favor I asked of her denied me. Yet my behaviour to her as pure and delicate when alone, as when before them—Hinted at something that had passed between us that very day, that showed her indifference to me in so strong a light, that I could not bear it. But that I would ask her for her company to the play of Venice Preserved, given out for Saturday night as a benefit-play; the prime actors to be in it; and this, to see if I were to be denied every favor.—Yet, for my own part, I loved not Tragedies; though she did, for the sake of the instruction, the warning, and the example generally given in them.

"I had too much feeling, I said. There was enough in the world to make our hearts sad, without carrying grief into our diversions, and making the distresses of others our own."

True enough, Belford; and I believe, generally speaking, that all the men of our cast are of my mind—They love not any tragedies but those in which they themselves act the parts of tyrants and executioners; and, afraid to trust themselves with serious and solemn reflections, run to comedies, in order to laugh away compunction on the distresses they have occasioned, and to find examples of men as immoral as themselves. For very few of our comic performances, as thou knowest, give us good ones.—I answer, however, for myself—Yet thou, I think, on recollection, lovest to deal in the lamentable.

Sally answered for Polly, who was absent, Mrs. Sinclair for herself, and for all her acquaintance, even for Miss Partington, in preferring the comic to the tragic scenes.—And I believe they are right; for the devil's in it, if a confided-in rake does not give a girl enough of tragedy in his comedy.

“I asked Sally to oblige my fair one with her company. She was engaged (that was right, thou'lt suppose.) I asked Mrs. Sinclair's leave for Polly. To be sure, she answered, Polly would think it an honor to attend Mrs. Lovelace: but the poor thing was tender-hearted; and as the tragedy was deep, would weep herself blind.

“Sally, mean time, objected Singleton, that I might answer the objection, and save my beloved the trouble of making it, or debating the point with me; and on this occasion I regretted that her brother's projects were not laid aside; since, if they had been given up, I would have gone in

person to bring up the Ladies of my family to attend my spouse.

“ I then, from a letter just before received from one in her father's family, warned them of a person who had undertaken to find us out, and whom I thus in writing (having called for pen and ink) described, that they might arm all the family against him” — “ A sun-burnt, pock-fretten sailor, ill-looking, big-boned; his stature about six foot; an heavy eye, an over-hanging brow, a deck-treading stride in his walk; a couteau generally by his side; lips parched from his gums, as if by staring at the sun in hot climates; a brown coat; a colored handkerchief about his neck; an oaken plant in his hand, near as long as himself, and proportionably thick.”

“ No questions asked by this fellow must be answered. They should call me to him. But not let my beloved know a tittle of this, so long as it could be helped. And I added, that if her brother or Singleton came, and if they behaved civilly, I would, for her sake, be civil to them: and in this case, she had nothing to do, but to own her marriage, and there could be no pretence for violence on either side. But most fervently I swore, that if she were conveyed away, either by persuasion or force, I would directly, on missing her but one day, go to demand her at Harlowe-place, whether she were there or not; and if I recovered not a sister, I would have a brother; and should find out a captain of a ship as well as he.”

And now, Jack, dost thou think she'll attempt to get from me, do what I will?

"Mrs. Sinclair began to be afraid of mischief in her house—I was apprehensive that she would overdo the matter, and be out of character. I therefore winked at her. She primmed; nodded, to show she took me; twanged out a high-ho thro' her nose, lapped one horse-lip over the other, and was silent."

Here's preparation, Belford!—Dost think I will throw it all away for any thing thou canst say, or Lord M.. write?—No indeed!—as my charmer says, when she bridles.

* * *

And what must necessarily be the consequence of all this, with regard to my beloved's behaviour to me?—Canst thou doubt, that it was all complaisance next time she admitted me into her presence?

Thursday we were very happy. All the morning extremely happy. I kissed her charming hand.—I need not describe to thee her hand and arm. When thou sawest her, I took notice that thy eyes dwelt upon them whenever thou couldst spare them from that beauty-spot of wonders, her face—Fifty-times kissed her hand, I believe.—Once her cheek, intending her lip, but so rapturously, that she could not help seeming angry.

Had she not thus kept me at arms-length; had she not denied me those innocent liberties which our sex, from step to step, aspire to; could I but have gained access to her in her hours of heedlessness and dishabille (for full dress creates dignity, augments

consciousness, and compels distance;) we had been familiarized to each other long ago. But keep her up ever so late; meet her ever so early; by breakfast-time she is dressed for the day; and at her earliest hour, as nice as others dressed. All her forms thus kept up, wonder not that I have made so little progress in the proposed trial. — But how must all this distance stimulate!

Thursday morning, as I said, we were extremely happy — About noon, she numbered the hours she had been with me; all of them to me but as one minute; and desired to be left to herself. I was loth to comply: but observing the sun-shine begin to shut in, I yielded.

I dined out. Returning, I talked of the house, and of Mrs. Fetchville — Had seen Mennel — had pressed him to get the widow to quit. She pitied Mrs. Fetchville (another good effect of the overheard conversation) — Had written to Lord M...; expected an answer soon from him. I was admitted to sup with her. I urged for her approbation or correction of my written terms. She again promised an answer as soon as she had heard from Miss Howe.

Then I pressed for her company to the play on Saturday night. She made objections, as I had foreseen: her brother's projects, warmth of the weather, &c. But in such a manner, as if half-afraid to disoblige me (another happy effect of the overheard conversation.) I soon got over these, therefore; and she consented to favor me.

Friday passed as the day before.

Here were two happy days to both. Why cannot I make every day equally happy? It looks as if it were in my power to do so. Strange, I should thus delight in teasing a woman I so dearly love! I must, I doubt, have something in my temper like Miss Howe, who loves to plague the man who puts himself in her power. — But I could not do thus by such an angel as this, did I not believe, that after her probation - time shall be expired, and if she be not to be brought to cohabitation (my darling view) I shall reward her as she wishes.

Saturday is half-over. We are equally happy — preparing for the play. Polly has offered her company, and is accepted. I have directed her where to weep: and this not only to show her humanity (a weeping eye indicates a gentle heart) but to have a pretence to hide her face with her fan or handkerchief. — Yet Polly is far from being every man's girl; and we shall sit in the gallery green-box.

The woes of others, so well represented as those of Belvidera particularly will be, must, I hope, unlock and open my charmer's heart. Whenever I have been able to prevail upon a girl to permit me to attend her to a play, I have thought myself sure of her. The female heart (all gentleness and harmony by nature) expands, and forgets its forms, when its attention is carried out of itself at an agreeable or affecting entertainment — Music, and perhaps a collation afterwards, co-operating.

Indeed, I have no hope of such an effect here; but I have more than one end to answer by getting

her to a play. To name but one — Dorcas has a master-key, as I have told thee. — But it were worth while to carry her to the play of *Venice Preserved*, were it but to show her, that there have been, and may be, much deeper distresses than she can possibly know.

Thus exceedingly happy are we at present. I hope we shall not find any of Nat. Lee's left-handed Gods at work, to dash our bowl of joy with worm-wood.

R. LOVELACE.

LETTER XXIX.

Miss CLARISSA HARLOWE, To Miss HOWE.

Friday, *May* 19.

I WOULD not, if I could help it, be so continually brooding over the dark and gloomy face of my condition (all nature, you know, my dear, and every thing in it, has a bright and a gloomy side) as to be thought unable to enjoy a more hopeful prospect. And this, not only for my own sake, but for yours, who take such generous concern in all that befalls me.

Let me tell you then, my dear, that I have known four-and-twenty hours together not unhappy ones, my situation considered.

She then gives the particulars of the conversation which she had overheard between Mr. Lovelace, Mrs. Sinclair, and Miss Martin; but accounts more minutely than he had done, for the opportunity she had of overhearing it, unknown to them.

She gives the reason she has to be pleased with what she heard from each: but is shocked at the measure he is resolved to take, if he misses her but for one day. Yet is pleased, that he proposes to avoid aggressive violence, if her brother and he meet in town.

Even Dorcas, says she, appears less exceptionable to me than before; and I cannot but pity her for her neglected education, as it is matter of so much regret to herself: else, there would not be much in it; as the low and illiterate are the most useful people in the commonwealth (since such constitute the laboring part of the public;) and as a lettered education but too generally sets people above those servile offices, by which the business of the world is carried on. Nor have I any doubt, that there are, take the world through, twenty happy people among the unlettered, to one among those who have had a school-education.

This, however, concludes not against learning or letters; since one would wish to lift to some little distinction, and more genteel usefulness, those who have capacity, and whose parentage one respects, or whose services one would wish to reward.

Were my mind quite at ease, I could enlarge, perhaps not unusefully, upon this subject; for I have considered it with as much attention as my years, and little experience and observation, will permit.

But the extreme illiterateness and indocility of this maid are surprising, considering that she wants not inquisitiveness, appears willing to learn, and, in other respects, has quick parts. This confirms to me what I have heard remarked, That there is a docible season, a learning-time, as I may say, for every person, in which the mind may be led step by step, from the lower to the higher, year by year, to improvement. How industriously ought these seasons, as they offer, to be taken hold of, by tutors, parents, and other friends, to whom the cultivation of the genius of children and youth is committed; since, once elapsed, and no foundation laid, they hardly ever return! — And yet it must be confessed, that there are some genius's, which, like some fruits, ripen not till late. And industry and perseverance will do prodigious things — But for a learner to have those first rudiments to master, at twenty years of age suppose, which others are taught, and they themselves might have attained, at ten, what an up-hill labor!

These kind of observations you have always wished me to interperse, as they arise to my thoughts. But it is a sign that my prospects are a little mended, or I should not, among so many more interesting ones, that my mind has been of

late filled with, have had heart's-ease enough to make them.

Let me give you my reflections on my more hopeful prospects.

I am now, in the first place, better able to account for the delays about the house, than I was before—Poor Mrs. Fetchville!—Tho' I know her not, I pity her!—Next, it looks well, that he had apprised the women (before this conversation with them) of his intention to stay in this house, after I was removed to the other. By the tone of his voice he seemed concerned for the appearance this new delay would have with me.

So handsomely did Miss Martin express herself of me, that I am sorry, methinks, that I judged so hardly of her, when I first came hither—Free people may go a great way, but not all the way: and as such are generally unguarded, precipitate, and thoughtless, the same quickness, changeableness, and suddenness of spirit, as I may call it, may intervene (if the heart be not corrupted) to recover them to thought and duty.

His reason for declining to go in person to bring up the Ladies of his family, while my brother and Singleton continue their machinations, carries no bad face with it; and one may the rather allow for their expectations, that so proud a spirit as his should attend them for this purpose, as he speaks of them sometimes as persons of punctilio.

Other reasons I will mention for my being easier in my mind than I was before I overheard this conversation.

Such as, the advice he has received in relation to Singleton's mate; which agrees but too well with what you, my dear, wrote to me in yours of May the 10th.

His not intending to acquaint me with it.

His cautions to the servants about the sailor, if he should come, and make inquiries about us.

His resolution to avoid violence, were he to fall in either with my brother, or this Singleton; and the easy method he has chalked out, in this case, to prevent mischief; since I need only not to deny my being his. But yet I should be exceedingly unhappy in my own opinion, to be driven into such a tacit acknowledgment to any new persons, till I am so, altho' I have been led (so much against my liking) to give countenance to the belief of the persons below that we are married.

I think myself obliged, from what passed between Mr. Lovelace and me on Wednesday, and from what I overheard him say, to consent to go with him to the play; and the rather, as he had the discretion to propose one of the nieces to accompany me.

I cannot but acknowledge that I am pleased to find, that he has actually written to Lord M...

I have promised to give Mr. Lovelace an answer to his proposals as soon as I have heard from you, my dear, on the subject.

I hope that in my next letter I shall have reason to confirm these favorable appearances. Favorable I must think them in the wreck I have suffered.

I hope, that in the trial which you hint may happen between me and myself (as you express it)

if he should so behave, as to oblige me to leave him, I shall be able to act in such a manner, as to bring no discredit upon myself in your eye; and that is all now that I have to wish for. But if I value him so much as you are pleased to suppose I do, the trial which you imagine will be so difficult to me, will not, I conceive, be upon getting from him, when the means to effect my escape are lent me; but how I shall behave when got from him; and if, like the Israelites of old, I shall be so weak as to wish to return to my Egyptian bondage.

I think it will not be amiss, notwithstanding the present favorable appearances, that you should perfect the scheme (whatever it be) which you tell me you have thought of, in order to procure for me an asylum, in case of necessity. Mr. Lovelace is certainly a deep and dangerous man; and it is, therefore, but prudence to be watchful, and to be provided against the worst. Lord bless me, my dear, how am I reduced! — Could I ever have thought to be in such a situation, as to be obliged to stay with a man, of whose honor by me I could have but the shadow of a doubt! — But I will look forward, and hope the best.

I am certain, that your letters are safe. — Be perfectly easy, therefore, on that head.

Mr. Lovelace will never be out of my company by his good-will; otherwise I have no doubt that I am mistress of my goings-out and comings-in; and did I think it needful, and were I not afraid of my brother, and captain Singleton, I would oftener put it to trial.

LETTER XXX.

Miss HOWE, To Miss CLARISSA HARLOWE.

Saturday *May 20.*

I DID not know, my dear, that you deferred giving an answer to Mr. Lovelace's proposals, till you had my opinion of them. A particular hand occasionally going to town, will leave this at Wilton's, that no delay may be made on that account.

I never had any doubt of the man's justice and generosity in matters of settlement; and all his relations are as noble in their spirits, as in their descent: but now, it may not be amiss for you to wait, to see what returns my Lord M.. makes to his letter of invitation.

The scheme I think of is this.

There is a person whom I believe you have seen with me; her name Townsend, who is a great dealer in Indian silks, Brussels and French laces, cambrics, linen, and other valuable goods; which she has a way of coming at, duty-free; and has a great vend for them (and for other curiosities which she imports) in the private families of the gentry round us.

She has her days of being in town, and then is at a chamber she rents at an inn in Southwark, where she keeps patterns of all her silks, and much of her portable goods, for the conveniency of her London

customers. But her place of residence, and where she has her principal warehouse, is at Deptford, for the opportunity of getting her goods on shore.

She was first brought to me by my mother, to whom she was recommended on the supposal of my speedy marriage; "that I might have an opportunity to be as fine as a princess," was my mother's expression, "at a moderate expense."

Now, my dear, I must own, that I do not love to encourage these contraband traders. What is it, but bidding defiance to the laws of our country, when we do; and hurting fair traders; and at the same time robbing our prince of his legal due, to the diminution of those duties which possibly must be made good by new levies upon the public?

But however Mrs. Townsend and I, tho' I have not yet had dealings with her, are upon a very good foot of understanding. She is a sensible woman; she has been abroad, and often goes abroad in the way of her business; and gives very entertaining accounts of all she has seen. And having applied to me, to recommend her to you (as it is her view to be known to young Ladies who are likely to change their condition) I am sure I can engage her to give you protection at her house at Deptford; which she says is a populous village; and one of the last, I should think, in which you would be sought for. She is not much there, you will believe, by the course of her dealings; but, no doubt, must have somebody on the spot, in whom she can confide: and there perhaps you might be safe, till your cousin comes. And I should not think it amiss, that you write to him out of hand. I

cannot suggest to you what you should write. That must be left to your own discretion. For you will be afraid, no doubt, of the consequence of a variance between the two men.

But notwithstanding all this, and were I sure of getting you safely out of his hands, I will nevertheless forgive you, were you to make all up with him, and marry to morrow. Yet I will proceed with my projected scheme in relation to Mrs. Townsend; tho' I hope there will be no occasion to prosecute it, since your prospects seem to be changed, and since you have had twenty-four not unhappy hours together. How my indignation rises for this poor consolation in the courtship (courtship must I call it?) of such a woman! Let me tell you, my dear, that were you once your own absolute and independent mistress, I should be tempted, notwithstanding all I have written, to wish you the wife of any man in the world rather than the wife either of Lovelace, or of Solmes.

Mrs. Townsend, as I have recollected, has two brothers, each a master of a vessel; and who knows, as she and they have concerns together, but that, in case of need, you may have a whole ship's crew at your devotion? If Lovelace give you cause to leave him, take no thought for the people at Harlowe-place. Let them take care of one another. It is a care they are used to. The law will help to secure them. The wretch is no assassin, no night-murderer. He is an open, because a fearless enemy; and should he attempt any thing that would make him obnoxious to the laws
of

of society, you might have a fair riddance of him either by flight or the gallows; no matter which.

Had you not been so minute in your account of the circumstances that attended the opportunity you had of overhearing the dialogue between Mr. Lovelace and two of the women, I should have thought the conference contrived on purpose for your ear.

I showed Mr. Lovelace's proposals to Mr. Hickman, who had chambers once at Lincoln's-Inn, being designed for the law, had his elder brother lived. He looked so wise, so proud, and so important upon the occasion; and wanted to take so much consideration about them — would take them home if I pleased — and weigh them well — and so forth — and the like — and all that — that I had no patience with him, and snatched them back with anger.

O dear! — to be so angry, an't please me, for his zeal —

Yes, zeal without knowledge, I said — like most other zeals — If there were no objections that struck him at once, there were none.

So hasty, dearest Madam! —

And so slow, un-dearest Sir, I could have said — But SURELY, said I, with a look which implied, Would you rebel, Sir!

He begged my pardon — Saw no objection, indeed! — But might he be allowed once more —

No matter — No matter — I would have shown them to my mother, I said, who, though of no Inn of Court, knew more of these things than half the lounging Lubbers of them; and that at first sight —

only that she would have been angry at the confession of our continued correspondence.

But, my dear, let the articles be drawn up, and engrossed; and solemnize upon them; and there's no more to be said.

Let me add, that the sailor-fellow has been tampering with my Kitty and offered a bribe, to find where to direct to you. Next time he comes, I will have him laid hold of; and if I can get nothing out of him, will have him drawn through one of our deepest fish-ponds. His attempt to corrupt a servant of mine will justify my orders.

I send this letter away directly. But will follow it by another; which shall have for its subject only my mother, myself, and your uncle Antony. And as your prospects are more promising than they have been, I will endeavour to make you smile upon the occasion. For you will be pleased to know, that my mother has had a formal tender from that grey goose, which may make her skill in settlements useful to herself, were she to encourage it.

May your prospects be still more and more happy,
prays

Your own

ANNA HOWE.

LETTER XXXI.

Miss HOWE, To Miss CLARISSA HARLOWE.

Sat. Sunday, *May* 20, 21.

NOW, my dear, for the promised subject. You must not ask me, how I came by the originals (such they really are) that I am going to present you with: for my mother would not read to me those parts of your uncle's letter, which bore hard upon myself, and which leave him without any title to mercy from me: nor would she let me hear but what she pleased of hers in answer; for she has condescended to answer him — with a denial, however: but such a denial, as no one but an old bachelor would take from a widow.

Any body, except myself, who could have been acquainted with such a fal-lal courtship as this must have been had it proceeded, would have been glad it had gone on: and I dare say, but for the saucy daughter, it had. My good mamma, in that case, would have been ten years the younger for it, perhaps: and could I but have approved of it, I should have been considered by her as if ten years older than I am: since, very likely, it would have been; "We widows, my dear, know not how to keep men at a distance — So as to give them pain, in order to try their love. — You must advise me, child: you must teach me to be cruel — Yet not too cruel neither — So as to make a man heartless,

who has no time, God wot, to throw away." Then would my behaviour to Mr. Hickman have been better liked; and my mother would have bridled like her daughter.

O my dear, how might we have been diverted, by the practisings for the recovery of the long-forgottens! could I have been sure that it would have been in my power to have put them asunder, in the Irish style, before they had come together. But there's no trusting to a widow whose goods and chattels are in her own hands, addressed by an old bachelor, who has fine things, and offers to leave her ten thousand pounds better than he found her, and sole mistress besides, of all her notables! For these, as you will see by-and-by are his proposals.

The old Triton's address carries the writer's marks upon the very superscription — To the equally amiable, and worthy admired (there's for you!) Mrs. ANNABELLA HOWE, Widow; — the last word added, I suppose as Esquire to a man, as a word of honor; or for fear the bella to Anna, should not enough distinguish the person meant from the spinster (vain hussy you'll call me, I know): and then follows: — These humbly present. — Put down as a memorandum, I presume, to make a leg, and behave handsomely at presenting it; he intending very probably to deliver it himself.

And now stand by — To see

Enter OLD NEPTUNE,

His head adorned with sea-weed, and a crown of cockle-shells; as we see him decked out in Mrs. Robinson's ridiculous Grotto.

Monday, *May* 15.

Madam,

I DID make a sort of resolution ten years ago, never to marry. I saw in other families, where they lived best, you will be pleased to mark that, queer-nesses I could not away with. Then, liked well enough to live single for the sake of my brother's family; and for one child in it more than the rest. But that girl has turned us all off the hinges; and why I should deny myself any comforts for them as will not thank me for so doing, I don't know.

So much for my motives, as from self and family: but the dear Mrs. Howe makes me go further.

I have a very great fortune, I bless God for it, all of my own getting, or most of it; you will be pleased to mark that; for I was the youngest brother of three. You have also, God be thanked, a great estate, which you have improved by your own frugality and wise management. Frugality, let me stop to say, is one of the greatest virtues in this mortal life, because it enables us to do justice to all, and puts it in our power to benefit some by it, as we see they deserve.

You have but one child; and I am a bachelor, and have never a one. — All bachelors cannot say so: wherefore your daughter may be the better for me, if she will keep up with my humor; which was never thought bad: especially to my equals. Servants, indeed, I don't matter being angry with, when I please: they are paid for bearing it, and too too often deserve it; as we have frequently taken notice of to one another. And moreover, if we keep not servants at distance, they will be familiar. I always made it a rule to find fault, whether reasonably or not, that so I might have no reason to find fault. Young women and servants in general (as worthy Mr. Solmes observes) are better governed by fear than love. But this my humor as to servants, will not affect either You or Miss, you know.

I will make very advantageous settlements; such as any common friend shall judge to be so. But must have all in my own power, while I live: because, you know, Madam, it is as creditable to the wife, as to the husband, that it should be so.

I aim not at fine words. We are not children; though it is hoped we may have some; for I am a very healthy sound man, I bless God for it: and never brought home from my voyages and travels, a worse constitution than I took out with me. I was none of those, I will assure you. But this I will undertake, that if you are the survivor, you shall be at the least ten thousand pounds the better for me: what, in the contrary case, I shall be the

better for you, I leave to you, as you shall think my kindness to you shall deserve.

But one thing, Madam, I should be glad of, that Miss Howe might not live with us then (she need not know I write thus) — But go home to Mr. Hickman, as she is upon the point of marriage, I hear: and if she behaves dutifully, as she should do, to us both, she shall be the better; for so I said before.

You shall manage all things, both mine and your own; for I know but little of land-matters. All my opposition to you shall be out of love, when I think you take too much upon you for your health.

It will be very pretty for you, I should think, to have a man of experience, in a long winter's evening, to sit down by you, and tell you stories of foreign parts, and the customs of the nations he has conformed with. And I have fine curiosities of the Indian growth, such as Ladies love, and some that even my niece Clary, when she was good, never saw. These, one by one, as you are kind to me (which I make no question of, because I shall be kind to you) shall all be yours. — Prettier entertainment by much, than sitting with a too smartish daughter, sometimes out of humor, and thwarting, and vexing, as daughters will (when women-grown especially, as I have heard you often observe); and thinking their parents old, without paying them the reverence due to years; when, as in your case, I make no sort of doubt, they are young enough to wipe their noses. You understand me, Madam.

As for me myself, it will be very happy, and I am delighted with the thinking of it, to have, after a pleasant ride, or so, a Lady of like experience with myself, to come home to, and but one interest betwixt us: to reckon up our comings-in together; and what this day and this week has produced:—O how this will increase love!—Most mightily will it increase it!—And I believe I shall never love you enough, or be able to show you all my love.

I hope, Madam, there need not be such maiden niceties and hangings-off, as I may call them, between us (for hanging-off sake) as that you will deny me a line or two to this proposal, written down, altho' you would not answer me so readily when I spoke to you; your daughter being, I suppose, hard by; for you looked round you, as if not willing to be overheard. So I resolved to write: that my writing may stand as upon record, for my upright meaning; being none of your Lovelaces; you will mark that, Madam; but a downright, true, honest, faithful Englishman. So hope you will not disdain to write a line or two to this my proposal: and I shall look upon it as a great honor, I will assure you, and be proud thereof.—What can I say more?—For you are your own mistress, as I am my own master: and you shall always be your own mistress, be pleased to mark that; for so a Lady of your prudence and experience ought to be.

This is a long letter. But the subject requires it; because I would not write twice where once would

do: so would explain my sense and meaning at one time.

I have had writing in my head, two whole months very near; but hardly knew how, being unpractised in these matters, to begin to write. And now, good Lady, be favorable to

Your most faithful Lover,

and obedient servant,

ANT. HARLOWE.

Here's a letter of courtship, my dear!—And let me subjoin to it, that if now, or hereafter, I should treat this hideous lover, who is so free with me to my mother, with asperity, and you should be disgusted at it; I shall think you don't give me that preference in your love, which you have in mine.

And now, which shall I first give you, the answer of my good mamma, or, the dialogue which passed between the widow-mother and the pert daughter, upon her letting the latter know that she had a love-letter?

I think you shall have the dialogue. But let me premise one thing; that if you think me too free, you must not let it run in your head, that I am writing of your uncle, or of my mother; but of a couple of old lovers, no matter whom. Reverence is too apt to be forgotten by children, where the

reverends forget first what belongs to their own characters. A grave remark, and, therefore, at your service, my dear.

Well then, suppose my mamma (after twice coming into my closet to me, and as often going out, with very meaning features, and lips ready to burst open, but still closed, as if by compulsion, a speech going off in a slight cough, that never went near the lungs) grown more resolute the third time of entrance, and sitting down by me, thus begin.

Mother. I have a very serious matter to talk with you upon, Nancy, when you are disposed to attend to matters within ourselves, and not let matters without ourselves wholly engross you.

A good felve-ish speech?—But I thought that friendship, and gratitude, and humanity, were matters that ought to be deemed of the most intimate concern to us. But not to dwell upon words:

Daughter. I am now disposed to attend to every thing my mamma is disposed to say to me.

M. Why then, child—why then, my dear —(and the good Lady's face looked so plump, so smooth, and so shining!)—I see you are all attention, Nancy! —But don't be surpris'd!—Don't be uneasy!—But I have—I have—where is it?—(and yet it lay next her heart, never another near it.—So no difficulty to have found it)—I have a letter, my dear! —(and out from her bosom it came: but she still held it in her hand)—I have a letter, child.—It is —It is—It is from—from a gentleman, I assure you!—(lifting up her head, and smiling).

There is no delight to a daughter, thought I, in such surprises as seem to be collecting. I will deprive my mother of the satisfaction of making a gradual discovery.

D. From Mr. Antony Harlowe, I suppose, Madam?

M. (Lips drawn closer: eye raised) Why, my dear!—I cannot but own—But how, I wonder, could you think of Mr. Antony Harlowe?

D. How, Madam, could I think of any body else?

M. How could you think of any body else!—(angrily, and drawing back her face) But do you know the subject, Nancy?

D. You have told it, Madam, by your manner of breaking it to me. But, indeed, I questioned not that he had two motives in his visits here—Both equally agreeable to me; for all that family love me dearly.

M. No love lost, if so, between you and them. But this (rising) is what I get—So like your papa!—I never could open my heart to him!

D. Dear Madam, excuse me. Be so good as to open your heart to me.—I don't love the Harlowes—But pray excuse me.

M. You have put me quite out with your forward temper! (angrily sitting down again).

D. I will be all patience and attention. May I be allowed to read his letter?

M. I wanted to advise with you upon it.—But you are such a strange creature!—You are always for answering one before one speaks!

D. You'll be so good as to forgive me, Madam — But I thought every body (he among the rest) knew, that you had always declared against a second marriage.

M. And so I have. But then it was in the mind I was in. Things may offer —

I stared.

M. Nay, don't be surpris'd! — I don't intend — I don't intend —

D. Not, perhaps, in the mind you are in, Madam.

— *M.* Pert creature! (rising again) — We shall quarrel, I see! — There's no —

D. Once more, dear Madam, I beg your excuse. I will attend in silence. — Pray, Madam, sit down again — Pray do (she sat down). — May I see the letter?

No; there are some things in it you won't like. Your temper is known, I find, to be unhappy. But nothing bad against you; intimations, on the contrary, that you shall be the better for him, if you oblige him.

Not a living soul but the Harlowes, I said, thought me ill-tempered: and I was contented that they should, who could do as they had done by the most universally acknowledged sweetness in the world.

Here we broke out a little; but at last, she read me some of the passages in the letter. But not the most mightily ridiculous; yet I could hardly keep my countenance neither, especially when she came to that passage which mentions his found

health; and at which she stopt; she best knew why — But soon resuming;

M. Well now, Nancy, tell me what you think of it.

D. Nay, pray, Madam, tell me what you think of it.

M. I expect to be answered by an answer; not by a question! — You don't use to be so shy to speak your mind.

D. Not when my mamma commands me to do so.

M. Then speak it now.

D. Without hearing the whole of the letter?

M. Speak to what you have heard.

D. Why then, Madam — You won't be my mamma Howe, if you give way to it.

M. I am surpris'd at your assurance, Nancy!

D. I mean, Madam, you will then be my mamma Harlowe.

M. O dear heart! — But I am not a fool.

And her color went and came.

D. Dear Madam (but, indeed, I don't love a Harlowe — that's what I meant) I am your child, and must be your child, do what you will.

M. A very pert one, I am sure, as ever mother bore! And you must be my child, do what I will! — As much as to say, you would not, if you could help it, if I —

D. How could I have such a thought! — It would be forward, indeed, if I had — when I don't know what your mind is as to the proposal: — when the proposal is so very advantageous a one too.

M. (looking a little less discomposed) Why, indeed, ten thousand pounds —

D. And to be sure of outliving him, Madam!

This staggered her a little.

M. Sure! — Nobody can be sure — But it is very likely, that —

D. Not at all, Madam. You was going to read something (but stopt) about his constitution: his sobriety is well known. — Why, Madam, these gentlemen who have used the sea, and been in different climates, and come home to relax from cares in a temperate one, and are sober — are the likeliest to live long of any men in the world. Don't you see, that his very skin is a fortification of buff?

M. Strange creature!

D. God forbid, that any body I love and honor should marry a man in hopes to bury him. — But suppose, Madam, at your time of life —

M. My time of life! — Dear heart! — What is my time of life, pray?

D. Not old, Madam; and that you are not, may be your danger!

As I hope to live, my dear, my mother smiled, and looked not displeased with me.

M. Why, indeed, child — Why, indeed, I must needs say — And then I should chuse to do nothing (froward as you are sometimes) to hurt you.

D. Why, as to that, Madam, I can't expect that you should deprive yourself of any satisfaction —

M. Satisfaction, my dear! — I don't say, it would be a satisfaction — But could I do any thing that

would benefit you, it would, perhaps, be an inducement to hold one conference upon the subject.

D. My fortune already will be more considerable than my match, if I am to have Mr. Hickman.

M. Why so?—Mr. Hickman has fortune enough to entitle him to yours.

D. If you think so, that's enough.

M. Not but I should think the worse of myself, if I desired any body's death; but I think, as you say, Mr. Antony Harlowe is a healthy man, and bids fair for a long life.

Bless me, thought I, how shall I do to know whether this be an objection or a recommendation!

D. Will you forgive me, Madam?

M. What would the girl say? (looking as if she was half-afraid to hear what.)

D. Only, that if you marry a man of his time of life, you stand two chances instead of one, to be a nurse at your time of life.

M. Saucebox!

D. Dear Madam!—What I mean is only, that these healthy old men sometimes fall into lingering disorders all at once. And I humbly conceive, that the infirmities of age are uneasily borne with, where the remembrance of the pleasanter season comes not in to relieve the healthier of the two.

M. A strange girl!—Yet his healthy constitution an objection just now!—But I always told you, that you know either too much to be argued with, or too little for me to have patience with you.

D. I can't but say, I should be glad of your com-

mands, Madam, how to behave myself to Mr. Antony Harlowe next time he comes.

M. How to behave yourself!—Why, if you retire with contempt of him, when he next comes, it will be but as you have been used to do of late.

D. Then he is to come again, Madam?

M. And suppose he be?

D. I can't help it if it be your pleasure, Madam. He desires a line in answer to his fine letter. If he come it will be in pursuance of that line, I presume?

M. None of your arch and pert leers, girl!—You know I won't bear them. I had a mind to hear what you would say to this matter. I have not written; but I shall presently.

D. It is mighty good of you, Madam (I hope the man will think so) to answer his first application by letter.—Pity he should write twice, if once will do.

M. That fetch won't let you into my intention, as to what I shall write. It is too saucily put.

D. Perhaps I can guess at your intention, Madam, were it to become me so to do.

M. Perhaps I would not make a Mr. Hickman of any man; using him the worse for respecting me.

D. Nor, perhaps, would I, Madam, if I liked his respects.

M. I understand you. But, perhaps, it is in your power to make me hearken, or not, to Mr. Harlowe.

D. Young men, who have probably a great deal of time before them, need not be in haste for a wife. Mr. Hickman, poor man! must stay his time, or take his remedy.

M. He

M. He bears more from you, than a man ought.

D. Then, I doubt, he gives a reason for the treatment he meets with.

M. Provoking creature!

D. I have but one request to make to you, Madam.

M. A dutiful one, I suppose. What is it, pray?

D. That if you marry, I may be permitted to live single.

M. Perverse creature, I'm sure!

D. How can I expect, Madam, that you should refuse such terms? Ten thousand pounds! — At the least ten thousand pounds! — A very handsome proposal! — So many fine things too, to give you one by one! — Dearest Madam, forgive me! — I hope it is not yet so far gone, that rallying this man will be thought want of duty to you.

M. Your rallying of him, and your reverence to me, it is plain, have one source.

D. I hope not, Madam. But ten thousand pounds —

M. Is no unhandsome proposal.

D. Indeed I think so. I hope Madam, you will not be behindhand with him in generosity.

M. He won't be ten thousand pounds the better for me, if he survive me.

D. No, Madam; he can't expect that, as you have a daughter, and as he is a bachelor, and has not a child! — Poor old soul!

M. Old soul, Nancy! — And thus to call him for being a bachelor, and not having a child? — Does this become you?

D. Not old soul for that, Madam. — But half the sum; five thousand pounds; you can't engage for less, Madam.

M. That sum has your approbation then? (looking as if she'd be even with me.)

D. As he leaves it to your generosity, Madam, to reward his kindness to you, it can't be less. — Do, dear Madam, permit me, without incurring your displeasure, to call him poor old soul again.

M. Never was such a whimsical creature! — Turning away to hide her involuntary smile (for I believe, I looked very archly; at least I intended to do so) — I hate that wicked sly look. You give yourself very free airs — Don't you?

D. I snatched her hand, and kissed it — My dear mamma, be not angry with your girl! — You have told me, that you was very lively formerly.

M. Formerly! Good lack! — But were I to encourage his proposals, you may be sure, that for Mr. Hickman's sake, as well as yours, I should make a wise agreement.

D. You have both lived to years of prudence, Madam.

M. Yes, I suppose I am an old soul too.

D. He also is for making a wise agreement, or hinting at one, at least.

M. Well, the short and the long I suppose is this: I have not your consent to marry.

D. Indeed, Madam, you have not my wishes to marry.

M. Let me tell you, that if prudence consists in

wishing well to one's self, I see not but the young flirts are as prudent as the old souls.

D. Dear Madam, would you blame me, if to wish you not to marry Mr. Antony Harlowe, is to wish well to myself?

M. You are mighty witty. I wish you were as dutiful.

D. I am more dutiful, I hope, than witty; or I should be a fool, as well as a saucebox.

M. Let me judge of both.—Parents are only to live for their children, let them deserve it or not. That's their dutiful notion!

D. Heaven forbid that I should wish, if there be two interests between my mother and me, that my mother postpone her own for mine! or give up any thing that would add to the real comforts of her life, to oblige me!—Tell me, my dear mamma, if you think the closing with this proposal will?

M. I say that ten thousand pounds is such an acquisition to one's family, that the offer of it deserves a civil return.

D. Not the offer, Madam: the chance only!—If indeed you have a view to an increase of family, the money may provide—

M. You can't keep within tolerable bounds! That saucy fleer I cannot away with—

D. Dearest, dearest Madam, forgive me; but old soul ran in my head again!—Nay, indeed and upon my word, I will not be robbed of that charming smile! And again I kissed her hand.

M. Away, bold creature! Nothing can be so

provoking as to be made to smile when one would chuse, and ought, to be angry.

D. But, dear Madam, if it be to be, I presume you won't think of it before next winter.

M. What now would the pert one be at?

D. Because he only proposes to entertain you with pretty stories of foreign nations in a winter's evening. Dearest, dearest Madam, let me have the reading of his letter through. I will forgive him all he says about me.

M. It may be a very difficult thing, perhaps, for a man of the best sense, to write a love-letter, that may not be cavilled at.

D. That's because lovers in their letters hit not the medium. They either write too much nonsense, or too little. But do you call this odd soul's letter (no more will I call him old soul, if I can help it) a love-letter?

M. Well, well, I see you are averse to this matter. I am not to be your mother; you will live single, if I marry. I had a mind to see if generosity governed you in your views. I shall pursue my own inclinations; and if they should happen to be suitable to yours, pray let me for the future be better rewarded by you, than hitherto I have been.

And away she flung, without staying for a reply. Vexed, I dare say, that I did not better approve of the proposal — Were it only that the merit of denying might have been all her own, and to lay the stronger obligation upon her saucy daughter.

She wrote such a widow-like refusal when she

went from me, as might not exclude hope in any other wooer; whatever it may do in Mr. Tony Harlowe.

It will be my part, to take care to beat her off the visit she half promises to make him (as you will see in her answer) upon condition that he withdraw his suit. For who knows what effect the old bachelor's exotics (far-fetched and dear-bought you know is a proverb) might otherwise have upon a woman's mind, wanting nothing but unnecessaries, gewgaw, and fineries, and offered such as are not easily to be met with, or purchased?

Well, but now I give you leave to read here, in this place, the copy of my mother's answer to your uncle's letter. Not one comment will I make upon it. I know my duty better. And here therefore, taking the liberty to hope, that I may, in your present less disagreeable, though not wholly agreeable situation, provoke a smile from you, I conclude myself,

Your ever-affectionate and faithful

ANNA HOWE.

Mrs. ANNABELLA HOWE, To ANTONY
HARLOWE, Esq;

Mr. Antony Harlowe,

Friday, *May* 19.

SIR,

IT is not usual I believe for our sex to answer by pen and ink the first letter on these occasions. The first letter! How odd is that! As if I expected another; which I do not. But then I think, as I do not judge proper to encourage your proposal, there is no reason why I should not answer in civility, where so great a civility is intended. Indeed, I was always of opinion, that a person was entitled to that, and not to ill usage, because he had a respect for me. And so I have often and often told my daughter.

A woman I think makes but a poor figure in a man's eye afterwards, and does no reputation to her sex neither, when she behaves like a tyrant to him beforehand.

To be sure, Sir, if I were to change my condition, I know not a gentleman whose proposal could be more agreeable. Your nephew and your nieces have enough without you: my daughter is a fine fortune without me, and I should take care to double it, living or dying, were I to do such a thing: so nobody need to be the worse for it. But Nancy would not think so.

All the comfort I know of in children, is, that when young they do with us what they will, and all is pretty in them, to their very faults; and when they are grown up, they think their parents must live for them only; and deny themselves every thing for their sakes. I know Nancy could not bear a father-in-law. She would fly at the very thought of my being in earnest to give her one. Not that I stand in fear of my daughter neither. It is not fit I should. But she has her poor papa's spirit. A very violent one that was. And one would not chuse, you know, Sir, to enter into any affair, that, one knows, one must renounce a daughter for, or she a mother. — Except indeed one's heart were much in it; which, I bless God, mine is not.

I have now been a widow these ten years; nobody to control me: and I am said not to bear control: so, Sir, you and I are best as we are, I believe: nay, I am sure of it: for we want not what either has; having both more than we know what to do with. And I know I could not be in the least accountable for any of my ways.

My daughter indeed, though she is a fine girl, as girls go (she has too much sense indeed for one of her sex; and knows she has it) is more a check to me than one would wish a daughter to be: for who would chuse to be always snapping at each other? But she will soon be married; and then, not living together, we shall only come together when we are pleased, and stay away when we are not; and so, like other lovers, never see any thing but the best sides of each other.

I own, for all this, that I love her dearly; and she me, I dare say: so would not wish to provoke her to do otherwise. Besides, the girl is so much regarded every where, that having lived so much of my prime a widow, I would not lay myself open to her censures, or even to her indifference, you know.

Your generous proposal requires all this explicitness. I thank you for your good opinion of me. When I know you acquiesce with this my civil refusal (and indeed, Sir, I am as much in earnest in it, as if I had spoken broader) I don't know but Nancy and I may, with your permission, come to see your fine things; for I am a great admirer of rarities that come from abroad.

So, Sir, let us only converse occasionally as we meet, as we used to do, without any other view to each other, than good wishes: which I hope may not be lessened for this declining. And then I shall always think myself

Your obliged Servant,

ANNABELLA HOWE.

P. S. I sent word by Mrs. Lorimer, that I would write an answer: but would take time for consideration. So hope, Sir, you won't think it a slight, I did not write sooner.

LETTER XXXII.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

Sunday, *May 21.*

I AM too much disturbed in my mind, to think of any thing but revenge; or I did intend to give thee an account of Miss Harlowe's observations on the play. Miss Harlowe's I say. Thou knowest that I hate the name of Harlowe; and I am exceedingly out of humor with her, and with her saucy friend.

What's the matter now, thou'lt ask?

Matter enough; for while we were at the play, Dorcas, who had her orders, and a key to her Lady's chamber, as well as a master-key to her drawers and mahogany chest, closet-key and all, found means to come at some of Miss Howe's last-written letters. The vigilant wench was directed to them by seeing her Lady take a letter out of her stays, and put it to the others, before she went out with me — Afraid, as the women upbraidingly tell me, that I should find it there.

Dorcas no sooner found them, than she assembled three ready writers of the Non-apparents; and Sally, and she, and they employed themselves with the utmost diligence, in making extracts, according to former directions, from these cursed letters, for my use. Cursed, I may well call them — Such abuses! Such virulence! — O this little fury Miss Howe! —

Well might her saucy friend (who has been equally free with me, or the occasion could not have been given) be so violent as she lately was, at my endeavouring to come at one of these letters.

I was sure, that this fair one, at so early an age, with a constitution so firm, health so blooming, eyes so sparkling, expectations, therefore, so lively, and hope so predominating, could not be absolutely, and from her own vigilance, so guarded, and so apprehensive, as I have found her to be.

Sparkling eyes, Jack, when the poetical tribe have said all they can for them, are an infallible sign of a rogue, or room for a rogue, in the heart.

Thou may'st go on with thy preachments, and Lord M.. with his wisdom of nations, I am now more assured of her than ever. And now my revenge is up, and joined with my love, all resistance must fall before it. And most solemnly do I swear, that Miss Howe shall come in for her snack.

And here, just now, is another letter brought from the same little virulent devil. I hope to procure transcripts from that too, very speedily, if it be put to the rest; for the saucy fair one is resolved to go to church this morning; not so much from a spirit of devotion, I have reason to think, as to try whether she can go out without check, control, or my attendance.

* * *

I have been denied breakfasting with her. Indeed she was a little displeased with me last night; because, on our return from the play, I obliged her to pass the rest of the night with the women and me,

in their parlour, and to stay till near one. She told me at parting, that she expected to have the whole next day to herself. I had not read the extracts then; so was all affectionate respect, awe, and distance; for I had resolved to begin a new course, and, if possible, to banish all jealousy and suspicion from her heart: and yet I had no reason to be much troubled at her past suspicions; since, if a woman will continue with a man whom she suspects, when she can get from him, or thinks she can, I am sure it is a very hopeful sign.

* * *

She is gone. Slept down before I was aware. She had ordered a chair, on purpose to exclude my personal attendance. But I had taken proper precautions. Will attended her by consent; Peter, the house-servant, was within Will's call.

I had, by Dorcas, represented her danger from Singleton, in order to dissuade her from going at all, unless she allowed me to attend her; but I was answered, with her usual saucy smartness, That if there were no cause of fear of being met with at the play-house, when there were but two playhouses, surely there was less at church, when there were so many churches. The chairmen were ordered to carry her to St. James's church.

But she would not be so careless of obliging me, if she knew what I have already come at, and how the women urge me on; for they are continually complaining of the restraint they lie under, in their behaviour; in their attendance; neglecting all their concerns in the front-house; and keeping this elegant

back one entirely free from company, that she may have no suspicion of them. They doubt not my generosity, they say: but why for my own sake, in Lord M..’s style, should I make so long a harvest of so little corn?

Women, ye reason well. I think I will begin my operations the moment she comes in.

* * *

I have come at the letter brought her from Miss Howe to-day. Plot, conjuration, forcery, witchcraft, all going forward! I shall not be able to see this Miss Harlowe with patience. As the nymphs below ask, so do I, Why is night necessary? And Sally and Polly upbraidingly remind me of my first attempts upon themselves. Yet force answers not my end — And yet it may, if there be truth in that part of the libertine’s creed, That once subdued, is always subdued! And what woman answers affirmatively to the question?

* * *

She is returned: but refuses to admit me; and insists upon having the day to herself. Dorcas tells me, that she believes her denial is from motives of piety — Oons, Jack, is there impiety in seeing me! — Would it not be the highest act of piety, to reclaim me? And is this to be done by her refusing to see me, when she is in a devouter frame than usual? — But I hate her, hate her heartily! She is old, ugly, and deformed. — But O the blasphemy! Yet she is a Harlowe: and I do and can hate her for that.

But since I must not see her (she will be mistress

of her own will, and of her time, truly!) let me fill up my time, by telling thee what I have come at.

The first letter the women met with, is dated April 27. Where can she have put the preceding ones!—It mentions Mr. Hickman as a busy fellow between them. Hickman had best take care of himself. She says in it, I hope you have no cause to repent returning my Norris—It is forthcoming on demand. Now, what the devil can this mean!—Her Norris forthcoming on demand!—The devil take me, if I am out-Norris'd!—If such innocents can allow themselves to plot (to Norris) well may I.

She is sorry, that her Hannah can't be with her—And what if she could?—What could Hannah do for her in such a house as this?

The women in the house are to be found out in one breakfasting. The women are enraged at both the correspondents for this; and more than ever make a point of my subduing her. I had a good mind to give Miss Howe to them in full property. Say but the word, Jack, and it shall be done.

She is glad that Miss Harlowe had thoughts of taking me at my word. She wondered I did not offer again. Advises her, if I don't soon, not to stay with me. Cautions her to keep me at distance; not to permit the least familiarity—See, Jack! See Belford!—Exactly as I thought!—Her vigilance all owing to a cool friend; who can sit down quietly, and give that advice, which in her own case she could not take. What an encouragement to me to proceed in my devices, when I have reason to think, that my beloved's reserves are owing more to Miss Howe's

cautions, than to her own inclinations! But it is my interest to be honest, Miss Howe tells her—Interest, fools!—I thought these girls knew, that my interest was ever subservient to my pleasure.

What would I give to come at the copies of the letters to which those of Miss Howe are answers!

The next letter is dated May 3. In this the little termagant expresses her astonishment, that her mother should write to Miss Harlowe, to forbid her to correspond with her daughter. Mr. Hickman, she says, is of opinion, that she ought not to obey her mother. How the creeping fellow trims between both! I am afraid, that I must punish him, as well as this virago; and I have a scheme rumbling in my head, that wants but half an hour's musing to bring into form, that will do my business upon both. I cannot bear, that the parental authority should be thus despised, thus trampled under foot—But observe the vixen, 'Tis well he is of her opinion; for her mother having set her up, she must have somebody to quarrel with.—Could a Lovelace have allowed himself a greater licence? This girl's a devilish rake in her heart. Had she been a man, and one of us, she'd have outdone us all in enterprise and spirit.

She wants but very little farther provocation, she says, to fly privately to London. And if she does, she will not leave her till she sees her either honorably married, or quit of the wretch. Here, Jack, the transcriber Sally has added a prayer—"For the Lord's sake, dear Mr. Lovelace, get this fury to London!"—Her fate, I can tell thee, Jack, if we had her among us, should not be so long deciding as

her friend's. What a gantlope would she run, when I had done with her, among a dozen of her own pitiless sex, whom my charmer shall never see!— But more of this anon.

I find by this letter, that my saucy captive had been drawing the characters of every varlet of ye. Nor am I spared in it more than you. The man's a fool, to be sure, my dear. Let me perish, if they either of them find me one! A silly fellow, at least. Cursed contemptible!—I see not but they are a set of infernals—There's for thee, Belford—and he the Beelzebub—There's for thee, Lovelace!—And yet she would have her friend marry a Beelzebub.—And what have any of us done (within the knowledge of Miss Harlowe) that she should give such an account of us, as should excuse so much abuse from Miss Howe?—But the occasion that shall warrant this abuse is to come!

She blames her, for not admitting Miss Partington to her bed—Watchful as you are, what could have happened?—If violence were intended, he would not stay for the night. I am ashamed to have this hinted to me by this virago. Sally writes upon this hint—"See, Sir, what is expected from you. An hundred and an hundred times have we told you of this."—And so they have. But, to be sure, the advice from them was not of half the efficacy as it will be from Miss Howe.—You might have sat up after her, or not gone to bed, proceeds she.

But can there be such apprehensions between them, yet the one advise her to stay, and the other resolve

to wait my imperial motion for marriage? I am glad I know that.

She approves of my propofal of Mrs. Fetchville's houfe. She puts her upon expecting fettlements; upon naming a day: and concludes with infifting upon her writing, notwithstanding her mother's prohibition; or bids her take the confequence. Undutiful wretches! How I long to vindicate againft them both, the insulted parental character!

Thou wilt fay to thyfelf, by this time, and can this proud and insolent girl be the fame Mifs Howe, who fighed for honeft Sir George Colmar; and who, but for this her beloved friend, would have followed him in all his broken fortunes, when he was obliged to quit the kingdom?

Yes, ſhe is the very fame. And I always found in others, as well as in myfelf, that a firft paſſion thoroughly ſubdued, made the conqueror of it a rover; the conquerors a tyrant.

Well, but now comes mincing in a letter from one who has the honor of dear Mifs Howe's commands, to acquaint Mifs Harlowe, that Mifs Howe is exceſſively concerned for the concern ſhe has given her.

I have great temptations, on this occaſion, ſays the prim Gothamite, to expreſs my own reſentments upon your preſent ſtate.

My own reſentments! — And why did he not fall into this temptation? — Why, truly, becauſe he knew not what that ſtate was which gave him ſo tempting a ſubject — Only by a conjecture, and ſo forth.

He then dances in his ſtyle, as he does in his gait!

To

To be sure, to be sure, he must have made the grand tour, and come home by the way of Tipperary.

And being moreover forbid, says the prancer, to enter into the cruel subject—This prohibition was a mercy to thee, friend Hickman!—But why cruel subject, if thou knowest not what it is, but conjecturest only from the disturbance it gives to a girl, that is her mother's disturbance, will be thy disturbance, and the disturbance, in turn, of every body with whom she is intimately acquainted, unless I have the humbling of her?

In another letter, the little fury professes, that she will write, and that no man shall write for her, as if some medium of that kind had been proposed. She approves of her fair friend's intention to leave me, if she can be received by her relations. I am a wretch, a foolish wretch. She hates me for my teasing ways. She has just made an acquaintance with one who knows a vast deal of my private history. A curse upon her, and upon her historiographer!—The man is really a villain, an execrable one. Devil take her! Had I a dozen lives, I might have forfeited them all twenty crimes ago. An odd way of reckoning, Jack!

Miss Betterton, Miss Lockyer, are named—The man (she irreverently repeats) she again calls a villain. Let me perish, I repeat, if I am called a villain for nothing!—She will have her uncle (as Miss Harlowe requests) founded about receiving her. Dorcas is to be attached to her interest: my letters are to be come at by surprise or trick—

What thinkest thou of this, Jack?

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P

Miss Howe is alarmed at my attempt to come at a letter of hers.

Were I to come at the knowledge of her freedoms with my character, she says, she should be afraid to stir out without a guard. I would advise the vixen to get her guard ready.

I am at the head of a gang of wretches (thee, Jack, and thy brother varlets, she owns she means) who join together to betray innocent creatures, and to support one another in their villanies — What sayst thou to this, Belford?

She wonders not at her melancholy reflections for meeting me, for being forced upon me, and tricked by me. — I hope, Jack, thou'lt have done preaching after this!

But she comforts her, that she will be both a warning and example to all her sex. I hope the sex will thank me for this.

The nymphs had not time, they say, to transcribe all that was worthy of my resentment in this letter: so I must find an opportunity to come at it myself. Noble rant, they say, it contains. — But I am a seducer, and a hundred vile fellows, in it. — And the devil, it seems, took possession of my heart, and of the hearts of all her friends, in the same dark hour, in order to provoke her to meet me. Again, There is a fate in her error, she says — Why then should she grieve? — Adversity is her shining time, and I can't tell what — Yet never to thank the man to whom she owes the shine!

In the next letter, Wicked as I am, she fears I must be her Lord and Master.

I hope so.

She retracts what she said against me in her last. — My behaviour to my Rosebud; Miss Harlowe to take possession of Mrs. Fetchville's house; I to stay at Mrs. Sinclair's; the stake I have in my country; my reversions; my œconomy; my person; my address (something like in all this!) are brought in my favor, to induce her now not to leave me. How do I love to puzzle these long-fighted girls!

Yet my teasing ways, it seems, are intolerable. — Are women only to tease, I trow? — The sex may thank themselves for teaching me to out-teaze them. So the headstrong Charles XII. of Sweden taught the Czar Peter to beat him, by continuing a war with the Muscovites against the ancient maxims of his kingdom.

May eternal vengeance pursue the villain (thank heaven, she does not say overtake) if he give room to doubt his honor! — Women can't swear, Jack — Sweet souls! they can only curse.

I am said to doubt her love — Have I not reason? And she, to doubt my ardor. — Ardor, Jack! — Why, 'tis very right — Women, as Miss Howe says, and as every rake knows, love ardors!

She apprises her of the ill success of the application made to her uncle — By Hickman, no doubt! — I must have this fellow's ears in my pocket, very quickly, I believe.

She says, she is equally shocked and enraged against all her family: Mrs. Norton's weight has been tried upon Mrs. Harlowe, as well as Mr. Hickman's upon

the uncle: but never were there, says the vixen such determined brutes in the world. Her uncle concludes her ruined already.—Is not that a call upon me, as well as a reproach?—They all expected applications from her when in distress—but were resolved not to stir an inch to save her life. She was accused of premeditation and contrivance. Miss Howe is concerned, she tells her, for the revenge my pride may put me upon taking for the distance she has kept me at.—And well she may.—It is now evident to her that she must be mine (for her cousin Morden, it seems, is set against her too)—An act of necessity; of convenience!—Thy friend, Jack, to be already made a woman's convenience!—Is this to be borne by a Lovelace?

I shall make great use of this letter. From Miss Howe's hints of what passed between her uncle Harlowe and Hickman (it must be Hickman) I can give room for my invention to play; for she tells her, that she will not reveal all. I must endeavour to come at this letter myself. I must have the very words: extracts will not do. This letter, when I have it, must be my compass to steer by.

The fire of friendship then blazes out and crackles. I never before imagined, that so fervent a friendship could subsist between two sister beauties, both toasts. But even here it may be inflamed by opposition, and by that contradiction which gives vigor to female spirits of a warm and romantic turn.

She raves about coming up, if by so doing she could prevent so noble a creature from stooping too low, or save her from ruin——One reed to

support another! I think I will contrive to bring her up.

How comes it to pass, that I cannot help being pleased with this virago's spirit, though I suffer by it? Had I her but here, I'd engage in a week's time to teach her submission without reserve. What pleasure should I have in breaking such a spirit! I should wish for her but for one month, in all, I think. She would be too tame and spiritless for me after that. How sweetly pretty to see the two lovely friends, when humbled and tame, both sitting in the darkest corner of the room, arm in arm, weeping and sobbing for each other! — And I their emperor, their then acknowledged emperor, reclined at my ease in the same room, uncertain to which I should first, Grand Signor like, throw out my handkerchief?

Again mind the girl: she is enraged at the Harlowes: she is angry at her own mother; she is exasperated against her foolish and low-vanityed Lovelace. Foolish! a little toad! (God forgive me for calling a virtuous girl a toad!) Let us stoop to lift the wretch out of his dirt, though we soil our fingers in doing it! — He has not been guilty of direct indecency to you. — It seems extraordinary to Miss Howe that I have not. — Nor dare he. — She should be sure of that. If women have such things in their heads, why should not I in my heart? — Not so much of a devil as that comes to neither. Such villanous intentions would have shown themselves before now if I had them. — Lord help them! —

She then puts her friend upon urging for settlements,

licence, and so forth.— No room for delicacy now, she says, and tells her what she shall say, to bring all forward from me.— Is it not as clear to thee, Jack, as it is to me, that I should have carried my point long ago, but for this vixen? She reproaches her for having modesty'd away, as she calls it, more than one opportunity, that she ought not to have slipt.— Thus thou seest, that the noblest of the sex mean nothing in the world by their shyness and distance, but to pound the poor fellow they dislike not, when he comes into their purlieus.

Though tricked into this man's power, she tells her, she is not meanly subjugated to it. There are hopes of my reformation, it seems, from my reverence for her; since before her I never had any reverence for what was good! I am a great, a specious deceiver. I thank her for this, however. A good moral use she says, may be made of my having prevailed upon her to swerve. I am glad that any good may flow from my actions.

Annexed to this letter is a paper the most saucy that ever was written of a mother by a daughter. There are in it such free reflections upon widows and bachelors, that I cannot but wonder how Miss Howe came by her learning. Sir George Colmar, I can tell thee, was a greater fool than thy friend, if she had it all for nothing.

The contents of this paper acquaint Miss Harlowe, that her uncle Antony has been making proposals of marriage to her mother.

The old fellow's heart ought to be a tough one, if he succeed; or she who broke that of a much

worthier man, the late Mr. Howe, will soon get rid of him.

But be this as it may, the stupid family is made more irreconcilable than ever to their goddess-daughter for old Antony's thoughts of marrying; so I am more secure of her than ever. And yet I believe at last, that my tender heart will be moved in her favor. For I did not wish, that she should have nothing but persecution and distress. — But why loves she the brutes, as Miss Howe justly calls them, so much; me so little?

I have still more unpardonable transcripts from other letters.

LETTER XXXIII.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

THE next letter is of such a nature, that, I dare say, these proud rogues would not have had it fall into my hands for the world.

I see by it to what her displeasure with me, in relation to my proposals, was owing. They were not summed up, it seems, with the warmth, with the ardor, which she had expected.

This whole letter was transcribed by Dorcas, to whose lot it fell. Thou shalt have copies of them all at full length shortly.

Men of our cast, this little devil says, she fancies, cannot have the ardors that honest men have. Miss

Howe has very pretty fancies, Jack. Charming girl! Would to heaven I knew whether my fair one answers her as freely as she writes! 'Twould vex a man's heart, that this virago should have come honestly by her fancies.

Who knows but I may have half a dozen creatures to get off my hands, before I engage for life? Yet, lest this should mean me a compliment, as if I would reform, she adds her belief, that she must not expect me to be honest on this side my grand climacteric. She has a high opinion of her sex, to think they can charm so long a man so well acquainted with their identicalness.

He to suggest delays, she says, from a compliment to be made to Lord M. .!— Yes, I, my dear! Because a man has not been accustomed to be dutiful, must he never be dutiful? In so important a case as this too! the hearts of his whole family engaged in it?—You did, indeed, says she, want an interposing friend.—But were I to have been in your situation, I would have torn his eyes out, and left it to his heart to furnish the reason for it. See! See! What sayest thou to this, Jack?

Villain—Fellow that he is! follow. And for what? Only for wishing that the next day were to be my happy one; and for being dutiful to my nearest relation.

It is the cruellest of fates, she says, for a woman to be forced to have a man whom her heart despises.—That is what I wanted to be sure of.—I was afraid, that my beloved was too conscious of her talents; of her superiority!—I was afraid that she,

indeed, despised me — And I cannot bear to think she does. But, Belford, I do not intend that this Lady shall be bound down by so cruel a fate. Let me perish, if I marry a woman who has given her most intimate friend reason to say, she despises me! — A Lovelace to be despised, Jack!

His clenched fist to his forehead on your leaving him in just displeasure — that is, when she was not satisfied with my ardors, if it please ye, — I remember the motion: but her back was towards me at the time *. Are these watchful Ladies all eye?

— But observe what follows; I wish it had been a poll-ax, and in the hands of his worst enemy. —

I will have patience, Jack; I will have patience! My day is at hand. — Then will I steel my heart with these remembrances.

But here is a scheme to be thought of, in order to get my fair prize out of my hands, in case I give her reason to suspect me.

This indeed alarms me. Now the contention becomes arduous. Now wilt thou not wonder, if I let loose my plotting genius upon them both. I will not be out-Norris'd, Belford.

But once more, she has no notion, she says, that I can or dare to mean her dishonor. But then the man is a fool — that's all. — I should indeed be a fool, to proceed as I do, and mean matrimony! However, since you are thrown upon a fool, says she, marry the fool, at the first opportunity; and

* She tells Miss Howe, that she saw this motion in the pier-glass. See p. 132.

though I doubt that this man will be the most unmanageable of fools, as all witty and vain fools are, take him as a punishment, since you cannot as a reward — Is there any bearing this, Belford?

But such men as myself, are the men that women do not naturally hate. — True as the gospel, Jack! — The truth is out at last. Have I not always told thee so? Sweet creatures and true Christians these young girls! They love their enemies. But rakes in their hearts all of them! “Like turns to like,” that’s the thing. Were I not well assured of the truth of this observation of the vixen, I should have thought it worth while, if not to be a good man, to be more of an hypocrite, than I found it needful to be.

But in the letter I came at to-day, while she was at church, her scheme is further opened; and a cursed one it is.

Mr. Lovelace then transcribes from his short-hand notes, that part of Miss Howe’s letter, which relates to the design of engaging Mrs. Townsend (in case of necessity) to give her protection till colonel Morden come: and repeats his vows of revenge; especially for these words: “that should he attempt any thing that would make him obnoxious to the laws of society, she might have a fair riddance of him, either by flight or the gallows; no matter which.”

He then adds; — ’Tis my pride, to subdue girls who know too much to doubt their knowledge;

and to convince them, that they know too little, to defend themselves from the inconveniences of knowing too much.

How passion drives a man on! proceeds he. — I have written a prodigious quantity in a very few hours! Now my resentments are warm, I will see, and, perhaps, will punish, this proud, this double-armed beauty. I have sent to tell her, that I must be admitted to sup with her. We have neither of us dined. She refused to drink tea in the afternoon: and I believe neither of us will have much stomach to our supper.

LETTER XXXIV.

Miss CLARISSA HARLOWE, To Miss HOWE.

Sunday Morning, Seven o'Clock.

I WAS at the play last night with Mr. Lovelace and Miss Horton. It is, you know, a deep and most affecting tragedy in the reading. You have my remarks upon it, in the little book you made me write upon the principal acting plays. You will not wonder, that Miss Horton, as well as I, was greatly moved at the representation, when I tell you, and have some pleasure in telling you, that Mr. Lovelace himself was very sensibly touched with some of the most affecting scenes. I mention this in praise of the author's performance; for I take Mr. Lovelace to be one of the most hard-hearted men in the world. Upon my word, my dear, I do.

His behaviour, however, on this occasion, and on our return, was unexceptionable; only that he would oblige me to stay to supper with the women below, when we came back, and to sit up with him and them till near one o'clock this morning. I was resolved to be even with him; and indeed I am not very sorry to have the pretence; for I love to pass the Sundays by myself.

To have the better excuse to avoid his teasing, I am ready dressed to go to church this morning. I will go only to St. James's church, and in a chair; that I may be sure I can go out and come in when I please, without being intruded upon by him, as I was twice before.

Near Nine o'clock.

I have your kind letter of yesterday. He knows I have. And I shall expect, that he will be inquisitive next time I see him after your opinion of his proposals. I doubted not your approbation of them, and had written an answer on that presumption; which is ready for him. He must study for occasions of procrastination, and to disoblige me, if now any thing happen to set us at variance again.

He is very importunate to see me. He has desired to attend me to church. He is angry that I have declined to breakfast with him. I am sure that I should not have been at my own liberty if I had. — I bid Dorcas tell him, that I desired to have this day to myself. I would see him in the morning as early

as he pleased. She says, she knows not what ails him, but that he is out of humor with every body.

He has sent again in a peremptory manner. He warns me of Singleton. I sent him word, that if he was not afraid of Singleton at the playhouse last night, I need not at church to day: so many churches to one playhouse. I have accepted of his servant's proposed attendance. But he is quite displeased, it seems. I don't care. I will not be perpetually at his insolent beck. — Adieu, my dear, till I return. The chair waits. He won't stop me, sure, as I go down to it.

* * *

I did not see him as I went down. He is, it seems, excessively out of humor. Dorcas says, not with me neither, she believes: but something has vexed him. This is put on perhaps to make me dine with him. But I will not, if I can help it. I shan't get rid of him for the rest of the day, if I do.

* * *

He was very earnest to dine with me. But I was resolved to carry this one small point; and so denied to dine myself. And, indeed, I was endeavouring to write to my cousin Morden; and had begun three different times, without being able to please myself.

He was very busy in writing, Dorcas says; and pursued it without dining, because I denied him my company.

He afterwards demanded, as I may say, to be admitted to afternoon-tea with me: and appealed by Dorcas to his behaviour to me last night; as if,

as I sent him word by her, he thought he had a merit in being unexceptionable. However, I repeated my promise to meet him as early as he pleased in the morning, or to breakfast with him.

Dorcas says, he raved: I heard him loud, and I heard his servant fly from him, as I thought. You, my dearest friend, say, in one of yours, that you must have somebody to be angry at, when your mother sets you up. I should be very loth to draw comparisons: but the workings of passion, when indulged, are but too much alike, whether in man or woman.

* * *

He has just sent me word, that he insists upon supping with me. As we had been in a good train for several days past, I thought it not prudent to break with him for little matters. Yet, to be, in a manner, threatened into his will, I know not how to bear that.

While I was considering, he came up, and, tapping, at my door, told me, in a very angry tone, he must see me this night. He could not rest, till he had been told what he had done to deserve the treatment I gave him.

Treatment I give him! — A wretch! — Yet perhaps he has nothing new to say to me. I shall be very angry with him.

As the Lady could not know what Mr. Lovelace's designs were, nor the cause of his ill humor, it will not be improper to pursue the subject from his letter.

Having described his angry manner of demanding, in person, her company at supper; he proceeds as follows.

'Tis hard, answered the fair perverse, that I am to be so little my own mistress. I will meet you in the dining room half an hour hence.

I went down to wait that half hour. All the women set me hard to give her cause for this tyranny. They demonstrated, as well from the nature of the sex, as of the case, that I had nothing to hope for from my tameness, and could meet with no worse treatment, were I to be guilty of the last offence. They urged me vehemently to try at least what effect some greater familiarities than I had ever taken with her, would have: and their arguments being strengthened by my just resentments on the discoveries I had made, I was resolved to take some liberties, and, as they were received, to take still greater, and lay all the fault upon her tyranny. In this humor I went up, and never had paralytic so little command of his joints, as I had, while I walked about the dining-room, attending her motions.

With an erect mien she entered, her face averted, her lovely bosom swelling, and the more charmingly protuberant for the erectness of her mien. O Jack! that fullness and reserve should add to the charms of this haughty maid! But in every attitude, in every humor, in every gesture, is beauty beautiful. — By her averted face, and indignant aspect, I saw the dear insolent was disposed to be angry — But

by the fierceness of mine, as my trembling hands seized hers, I soon made fear her predominant passion. And yet the moment I beheld her, my heart was daunted; and my reverence for the virgin purity so visible in her whole deportment, again took place. Surely, Belford, this is an angel. And yet, had she not been known to be a female, they would not from babyhood have dressed her as such, nor would she, but upon that conviction, have continued the dress.

Let me ask you, Madam, I beseech you tell me, what I have done to deserve this distant treatment?

And let me ask you, Mr. Lovelace, why are my retirements to be thus invaded? — What can you have to say to me since last night, that I went with you so much against my will to the play? And after sitting up with you, equally against my will, till a very late hour?

This I have to say, Madam, that I cannot bear to be kept at this distance from you under the same roof.

Under the same roof, Sir! — How came you —

Hear me out, Madam, (letting go her trembling hands, and snatching them back again with an eagerness that made her start) — I have a thousand things to say, to talk of, relating to our present and future prospects; but when I want to open my whole soul to you, you are always contriving to keep me at a distance. You make me inconsistent with myself. Your heart is set upon delays. You must have views that you will not own. Tell me, Madam, I conjure you to tell me, this moment, without subterfuge or reserve, in what light am I to appear to you in future? I cannot

cannot bear this distance. The suspense you hold me in I cannot bear.

In what light, Mr. Lovelace! (visibly terrified) In no bad light, I hope — Pray, Mr. Lovelace, do not grasp my hands so hard (endeavouring to withdraw them). Pray let me go. —

You hate me, Madam —

I hate nobody, Sir —

You hate me, Madam, repeated I.

Instigated and resolved, as I came up, I wanted some new provocation. The devil, indeed, as soon as my angel made her appearance, crept out of my heart; but he had left the door open, and was no farther off than my elbow.

You come up in no good temper, I see, Mr. Lovelace — But pray be not violent — I have done you no hurt — Pray be not violent —

Sweet creature! And I clasped one arm about her, holding one hand in my other — You have done me no hurt! — I could have devoured her — But restraining myself — You have done me the greatest hurt! In what have I deserved the distance you keep me at? — I knew not what to say.

She struggled to disengage herself — Pray, Mr. Lovelace, let me withdraw. I know not why this is. I know not what I have done to offend you. I see you are come with a design to quarrel with me. If you would not terrify me by the ill humor you are in, permit me to withdraw. I will hear all you have to say another time — To morrow morning, as I sent you word — But, indeed, you frighten me.

I beseech you, if you have any value for me, permit me to withdraw.

Night, midnight, is necessary, Belford. Surprise, terror, must be necessary to the ultimate trial of this charming creature, say the women below what they will. I could not hold my purposes. This was not the first time that I had intended to try if she could forgive.

I kissed her hand with a fervor, as if I would have left my lips upon it.—Withdraw then, dearest and ever-dear creature. Indeed I entered in a very ill humor. I cannot bear the distance at which you so causlessly keep me. Withdraw, Madam, since it is your will to withdraw; and judge me generously; judge me but as I deserve to be judged; and let me hope to meet you to morrow morning early, in such a temper as becomes our present situation, and my future hopes.

And so saying, I conducted her to the door, and left her there. But instead of going down to the women, I went into my own chamber, and locked myself in; ashamed of being awed by her majestic loveliness, and apprehensive virtue, into so great a change of purpose, notwithstanding I had such just provocations from the letters of her saucy friend, founded on her own representation of facts and situations between herself and me.

The Lady (dating Sunday night) thus describes her terrors, and Mr. Lovelace's behaviour, on the occasion:

On my entering the diningroom, he took my hands in his, in such a humor, as I saw plainly he was resolved to quarrel with me—And for what?—What had I done to him?—I never in my life beheld in any body such wild, such angry, such impatient airs. I was terrified; and instead of being as angry as I intended to be, I was forced to be all mildness. I can hardly remember what were his first words, I was so frightened. But, You hate me, Madam! You hate me, Madam! were some of them—with such a fierceness—I wished myself a thousand miles distant from him. I hate nobody, said I; thank God I hate nobody—You terrify me Mr. Lovelace.—Let me leave you.—The man, my dear, looked quite ugly—I never saw a man look so ugly as passion made him look—And for what?—And he so grasped my hands!—Fierce creature!—He so grasped my hands! In short, he seemed by his looks, and by his words (once putting his arms about me) to wish me to provoke him. So that I had nothing to do but to beg of him (which I did repeatedly) to permit me to withdraw; and to promise to meet him at his own time in the morning.

It was with a very ill grace that he complied, on that condition; and at parting he kissed my hand with such a savageness, that a redness remains upon it still.

Do you not think, my dear, that I have reason to be incensed at him, my situation considered? Am I not under a necessity, as it were, of quarrelling with him; at least every other time I see him?

No prudery, no coquetry, no tyranny in my heart, or in my behaviour to him, that I know of. No affected procrastination. Aiming at nothing but decorum. He as much concerned, and so he ought to think, as I, to have that observed. Too much in his power: cast upon him by the cruelty of my relations. No other protection to fly to but his. One plain path before us; yet such embarrasses, such difficulties, such subjects for doubt, for cavil, for uneasiness; as fast as one is obviated, another to be introduced, and not by myself — I know not how introduced — What pleasure can I propose to myself in meeting such a wretch?

Perfect for me, my dearest Miss Howe, perfect for me, I beseech you, your kind scheme with Mrs. Townsend; and I will then leave this man.

My temper, I believe, is changed. No wonder if it be. I question whether ever it will be what it was. But I cannot make him half so uneasy by the change as I am myself. See you not how, from step to step, he grows upon me? — I tremble to look back upon his encroachments. And now to give me cause to apprehend more evil from him, than indignation will permit me to express! — O my dear perfect your scheme, and let me fly from so strange a wretch!

Yet to be first an eloper from my friends to him, as the world supposes; and now to be so from him (to whom I know not!) how hard to one who ever endeavoured to shun intricate paths! But he must certainly have views in quarrelling with me thus, which he dare not own! — Yet what can

they be?—I am terrified but to think what they may be!

Let me but get from him!—As to my reputation, if I leave him—that is already too much wounded for me, now, to be careful about any thing, but how to act so, as that my own heart shall not reproach me. As to the world's censure, I must be content to suffer that—An unhappy composition, however.—What a wreck have my fortunes suffered, to be obliged to throw overboard so many valuables, to preserve, indeed, the only valuable!—A composition that once it would have half-broken my heart to think there would have been the least danger that I should be obliged to submit to.

You, my dear, could not be a stranger to my most secret failings, altho' you would not tell me of them. What a pride did I take in the applause of every one!—What a pride even in supposing I had not that pride!—Which concealed itself from my unexamining heart under the specious veil of humility, doubling the merit to myself by the supposed, and, indeed, imputed, gracefulness in the manner of conferring benefits, when I had not a single merit in what I did, vastly overpaid by the pleasure of doing some little good, and impelled, as I may say, by talents given me—For what?—Not to be proud of.

So desirous, in short to be considered as an example! A vanity which my partial admirers put into my head!—And so secure in my own virtue!

I am punished enough, enough mortified, for this my vanity — I hope, enough, if it so please the all-gracious Inflicter: since now, I verily think, I more despise myself for my presumptuous self-security, as well as vanity, than ever I secretly vaunted myself on my good inclinations: secretly, I say, however; for, indeed, I had not given myself leisure to reflect, till I was thus mortified, how very imperfect I was; nor how much truth there is in what Divines tell us, That we sin in our best performances.

But I was very young — But here let me watch over myself again: for in those four words, “I was very young”, is there not a palliation couched, that were enough to take all efficacy from the discovery and confession?

What strange imperfect beings! — But Self here which is at the bottom of all we do, and of all we wish, is the grand misleader.

I will not apologize to you, my dear, for these grave reflections. Is it not enough to make the unhappy creature look into herself, and endeavour to detect herself, who, from such a high reputation, left to proud and presumptuous self, should, by one thoughtless step, be brought to the dreadful situation I am in?

Let me, however, look forward: to despond would be to add sin to sin. And whom have I to raise me up, whom to comfort me, if I desert myself? — Thou O Father! who, I hope, hast not yet deserted, hast not yet cursed me! — For I am

thine! — It is fit that meditation should supply the rest. —

* * *

I was so disgusted with him, as well as frightened by him, that on my return to my chamber, in a fit of passionate despair, I tore almost in two, the answer I had written to his proposals.

I will see him in the morning, because I promised I would. But I will go out, and that without him, or any attendant. If he account not tolerably for his sudden change of behaviour, and a proper opportunity offer of a private lodging in some creditable house, I will not any more return to this — At present I think so. — And there will I either attend the perfecting of your scheme; or, by your epistolary mediation, make my own terms with the wretch; since it is your opinion, that I must be his, and cannot help myself: or, perhaps, take a resolution to throw myself at once into Lady Betty's protection; and this will hinder him from making his insolently threatened visit to Harlowe place.

The Lady writes again on Monday evening; and gives her friend an account of all that passed between herself and Mr. Lovelace that day; and of her being terrified out of her purpose of going out: but Mr. Lovelace's next letters giving a more ample account of all, hers are omitted.

It is proper, however, to mention, that she re-urges Miss Howe (from the dissatisfaction she has rea-

son for from what passed between Mr. Lovelace and herself) to perfect her scheme in relation to Mrs. Townsend. She concludes her letter in these words:

I should say something of your last favor (but a few hours ago received) and of your dialogue with your mother—Are you not very whimsical, my dear? I have but two things to wish for on this occasion.—The one, that your pleasantry had a better subject than that you find for it in this dialogue—The other, that my situation were not such, as must too often damp that pleasantry in you, and will not permit me to enjoy it, as I used to do. Be, however, happy in yourself, though you cannot in

Your

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER XXXV.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

Monday Morn. *May 22.*

NO generosity in this Lady. None at all. Wouldst thou not have thought, that after I had permitted her to withdraw, primed for mischief as I was, she would meet me next morning early, and that with a smile, making me one of her best courtesies?

I was in the diningroom before six, expecting her. She opened not her door. I went up stairs and down; and hemm'd; and called Will; called Dorcas; threw the doors hard to; but still she opened not her door. Thus till half an hour after eight, fooled I away my time; and then (breakfast ready) I sent Dorcas to request her company.

But I was astonished, when (following the wench, as she did at the first invitation) I saw her enter dressed, all but her gloves, and those and her fan in her hand; in the same moment bidding Dorcas direct Will, to get her a chair to the door.

Cruel creature, thought I, to expose me thus to the derision of the women below!

Going abroad, Madam?

I am, Sir.

I looked curst silly, I am sure. You will breakfast, I hope, Madam; in a very humble strain; yet with an hundred tenter-hooks in my heart.

Had she given me more notice of her intention, I had perhaps wrought myself up to the frame I was in the day before, and begun my vengeance. And immediately came into my head all the virulence that had been transcribed for me from Miss Howes's letters, and in that letter which I had transcribed myself.

Yes, she would drink one dish; and then laid her gloves and fan in the window just by.

I was perfectly disconcerted. I hemm'd, and was going to speak several times; but knew not in what key. Who's modest now, thought I! Who's insolent now! — How a tyrant of a woman confounds

a bashful man! — She was acting Miss Howe, I thought; and I the spiritless Hickman.

At last, I will begin, thought I.

She a dish — I a dish.

Sip, her eyes her own, she; like an haughty and imperious sovereign, conscious of dignity, every look a favor.

Sip, like her vassal, I; lips and hands trembling, and not knowing that I sipp'd or tasted.

I was — I was — I sipp'd — (drawing in my breath and the liquor together, though I scalded my mouth with it) I was in hopes, Madam —

Dorcas came in just then. — Dorcas, said she, is a chair gone for?

Damn'd impertinence, thought I, thus to put me out in my speech! And I was forced to wait for the servant's answer to the insolent mistress's question.

William is gone for one, Madam.

This cost me a minute's silence before I could begin again. And then it was with my hopes, and my hopes, and my hopes that I should have been early admitted to —

What weather is it, Dorcas? said she, as regardless of me as if I had not been present.

A little lowering, Madam — The sun is gone in — It was very fine half an hour ago.

I had no patience. Up I rose. Down went the tea-cup, saucer and all — Confound the weather, the sunshine, and the wench! — Begone for a devil, when I am speaking to your Lady, and have so little opportunity given me.

Up rose the saucy-face, half-frighted; and snatched from the window her gloves and fan.

You must not go, Madam! — Seizing her hand — By my soul you must not —

Must not, Sir! — But I must — You can curse your maid in my absence, as well as if I were present — Except — except — you intend for me, what you direct to her.

Dearest creature, you must not go — You must not leave me — Such determined scorn! Such contempts! — Questions asked your servant of no meaning but to break in upon me — I cannot bear it!

Detain me not, struggling. I will not be withheld. I like you not, nor your ways. You fought to quarrel with me yesterday, for no reason in the world that I can think of, but because I was too obliging. You are an ungrateful man; and I hate you with my whole heart, Mr. Lovelace!

Do not make me desperate, Madam. Permit me to say, that you shall not leave me in this humor. Wherever you go, I will attend you. Had Miss Howe been my friend, I had not been thus treated. It is but too plain to whom my difficulties are owing. I have long observed, that every letter you receive from her, makes an alteration in your behaviour to me. She would have you treat me, as she treats Mr. Hickman, I suppose: but neither does that treatment become your admirable temper to offer, nor me to receive.

This startled her. She did not care to have me think hardly of Miss Howe.

But recollecting herself, Miss Howe, said she, is a friend to virtue, and to good men. If she like not you, it is because you are not one of those.

Yes, Madam, and therefore to speak of Mr. Hickman and myself, as you both, I suppose, think of each, she treats him as she would not treat a Lovelace.—I challenge you, Madam, to show me but one of the many letters you have received from her, where I am mentioned.

Miss Howe is just; Miss Howe is good, replied she. She writes, she speaks, of every body as they deserve. If you point me out but any one occasion, upon which you have reason to build a merit to yourself, as either just or good, or even generous, I will look out for her letter on that occasion (If such an occasion there be, I have certainly acquainted her with it), and will engage it shall be in your favor.

Devilish severe! And as indelicate as severe, to put a modest man upon hunting backward after his own merits.

She would have flung from me: I will not be detained, Mr. Lovelace. I will go out.

Indeed you must not, Madam, in this humor. And I placed myself between her and the door.—And then, fanning, she threw herself into a chair, her sweet face all crimsoned over with passion.

I cast myself at her feet.—Begone, Mr. Lovelace, said she, with a rejecting motion, her fan in her hand; for your own sake leave me!—My soul is above thee, man! with both her hands pushing me from her!—Urge me not to tell thee, how sincerely

I think my soul above thee! — Thou hast in mine, a proud, a too proud heart, to contend with! — Leave me, and leave me for ever! — Thou hast a proud heart to contend with!

Her air, her manner, her voice, were bewitchingly noble, though her words were so severe.

Let me worship an angel, said I, no woman. Forgive me, dearest creature! — Creature if you be, forgive me! — Forgive my inadvertencies! Forgive my inequalities! — Pity my infirmities! — Who is equal to my Clarissa?

I trembled between admiration and love; and wrapt my arms about her knees, as she sat. She tried to rise at the moment; but my clasping round her thus ardently, drew her down again; and never was woman more affrighted. But free as my clasping emotion might appear to her apprehensive heart, I had not, at the instant, any thought but what reverence inspired. And till she had actually withdrawn (which I permitted under promise of a speedy return, and on her consent to dismiss the chair) all the motions of my heart were as pure as her own,

She kept not her word. An hour I waited before I sent to claim her promise. She could not possibly see me yet, was the answer. As soon as she could, she would.

Dorcas says, she still excessively trembled; and ordered her to give her hartshorn and water.

A strange apprehensive creature! Her terror is too great for the occasion. Evils are often greater in apprehension than in reality. Hast thou never observed,

that the terrors of a bird caught, and actually in the hand, bear no comparison to what we might have supposed those terrors would be, were we to have formed a judgment of the same bird by its shyness before it was taken?

Dear creature! — Did she never romp? Did she never from girlhood to now, hoyden? The innocent kinds of freedom taken and allowed on these occasions, would have familiarized her to greater. Sacrilege but to touch the hem of her garment! — Excess of delicacy! — O the consecrated beauty! how can she think to be a wife!

But how do I know till I try, whether she may not by a less alarming treatment be prevailed upon, or whether (day, I have done with thee!) she may not yield to nightly surprises? This is still the burden of my song, I can marry her when I will. And if I do, after prevailing (whether by surprise, or by reluctant consent) whom but myself shall I have injured?

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It is now eleven o'clock. She will see me as soon as she can, she tells Polly Horton, who made her a tender visit, and to whom she is less reserved than to any body else. Her emotion, she assures her, was not owing to perverseness, to nicety, to humor; but to weakness of heart. She has not strength of mind sufficient, she says, to enable her to support her condition.

Yet what a contradiction! — Weakness of heart; says she, with such strength of will! — O Belford! she is a lion-hearted Lady, in every case where her

honor, her punctilio rather, calls for spirit. But I have had reason more than once in her case, to conclude, that the passions of the gentle, flower to be moved than those of the quick, are the most flaming, the most irresistible, when raised. — Yet her charming body is not equally organized. The unequal partners pull two ways; and the divinity within her tears her filken frame. But had the same soul informed a masculine body, never would there have been a truer hero.

Monday, two o'clock.

Not yet visible! — My beloved is not well. What expectations had she from my ardent admiration of her! — More rudeness than revenge apprehended. Yet, how my soul thirsts for revenge upon both these Ladies! I must have recourse to my master-strokes. This cursed project of Miss Howe and her Mrs. Townsend (if I cannot contrive to render it abortive) will be always a sword hanging over my head. Upon every little disobligation my beloved will be for taking wing; and the pains I have taken to deprive her of every other refuge or protection in order to make her absolutely dependent upon me, will be all thrown away. But, perhaps, I shall find out a smuggler to counterplot Miss Howe.

Thou rememberest the contention between the sun and the Northwind, in the fable; which should first make an honest traveller throw off his cloak.

Boreas began first. He puffed away most vehemently; and often made the poor fellow curve and stagger; but with no other effect, than to cause him to wrap his furtout the closer about him.

But when it came to Phœbus's turn, he so played upon the traveller with his beams, that he made him first unbutton, and then throw it quite off:—Nor left he, till he obliged him to take to the friendly shade of a spreading beech; where prostrating himself on the thrown-off cloak, he took a comfortable nap.

The victor-god then laughed outright, both at Boreas and the traveller, and pursued his radiant course, shining upon, and warming and cherishing a thousand new objects, as he danced along: and at night, when he put up his fiery couriers, he diverted his Thetis with the relation of his pranks in the passed day.

I, in like manner, will discard all my boistrous inventions: and if I can oblige my sweet traveller to throw aside, but for one moment, the cloak of her rigid virtue, I shall have nothing to do, but, like the sun, to bless new objects with my rays. But my chosen hours of conversation and repose, after all my peregrinations, will be devoted to my goddesses.

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And now, Belford; according to my new system, I think this house of Mrs. Fetchville an embarrass upon me. I will get rid of it; for some time at least. Mennell, when I am out, shall come to her, inquiring for me. What for? thou'lt ask. What for!

for!—Hast thou not heard what has befallen poor Mrs. Fetchville?—Then I'll tell thee.

One of her maids, about a week ago, was taken with the small pox.. The rest kept their mistress ignorant of it till Friday; and then she came to know it by accident. The greater half of the plagues poor mortals of condition are tormented with, proceed from the servants they take, partly for show, partly for use, and with a view to lessen their cares.

This has so terrified the widow, that she is taken with all the symptoms that threaten an attack from that dreadful enemy of fair faces.—So must not think of removing: yet cannot expect, that we should be further delayed on her account.

She now wishes, with all her heart, that she had known her own mind, and gone into the country at first when I treated about the house: this evil then had not happened! A cursed cross accident for us, too!—High ho! Nothing else, I think, in this mortal life! People need not study to bring crosses upon themselves by their petulancies.

So this affair of the house will be over; at least, for one while. But then I can fall upon an expedient which will make amends for this disappointment. I must move slow, in order to be sure. I have a charming contrivance or two in my head, even supposing my beloved should get away, to bring her back again.

But what is become of Lord M.. I trow, that he writes not to me, in answer to my invitation? If he would send me such a letter as I could show, it might go a great way towards a perfect reconciliation.

I have written to Charlotte about it. He shall soon hear from me, and that in a way he won't like, if he writes not quickly. He has sometimes threatened to disinherit me: but if I should renounce him, it would be but justice, and would vex him ten times more, than any thing he can do, will vex me. Then, the settlements unavoidably delayed, by his neglect! — How shall I bear such a life of procrastination! — I, who, as to my will, and impatience, and so forth, am of the true Lady make, and can as little bear control and disappointment as the best of them!

* * *

Another letter, from Miss Howe. I suppose it is that which she promises in her last to send her relating to the courtship between old Tony the uncle, and Annabella the mother. I should be extremely rejoiced to see it. No more of the smuggler-plot in it, surely! This letter, it seems, she has put in her pocket. But I hope I shall soon find it deposited with the rest.

Monday Evening.

At my repeated request she condescended to meet me in the diningroom to afternoon tea, and not before.

She entered with bashfulness, as I thought; in a pretty confusion, for having carried her apprehensions too far. Sullen and slow moved she towards the tea-table. — Dorcas present, busy in tea-cup

preparations. I took her reluctant hand, and pressed it to my lips—Dearest, loveliest of creatures, why this distance? Why this displeasure?—How can you thus torture the faithfullest heart in the world?

She disengaged her hand. Again I would have snatched it.

Be quiet peevishly withdrawing it: and down she sat; a gentle palpitation in the beauty of beauties indicating mingled fullness and resentment; her snowy handkerchief rising and falling, and a sweet flush overspreading her charming cheeks.

For God's sake, Madam!—And a third time I would have taken her repulsing hand.

And for the same sake, Sir, no more teasing.

Dorcas retired; I drew my chair nearer hers, and with the most respectful tenderness took her hand; and told her, that I could not forbear to express my apprehensions (from the distance she was so desirous to keep me at) that if any man in the world was more indifferent to her, to use no harsher a word, than another, it was the unhappy wretch before her.

She looked steadily upon me for a moment, and with her other hand, not withdrawing that I held, pulled her handkerchief out of her pocket; and by a twinkling motion urged forward a tear or two which having arisen in each sweet eye, it was plain by that motion, she would rather have dissipated: but answered me only with a sigh, and an averted face.

I urged her to speak; to look up at me; to bless me with an eye more favorable.

I had reason, she told me, for my complaint of her indifference. She saw nothing in my mind that was generous. I was not a man to be obliged or favored. My strange behaviour to her since Saturday night, for no cause at all that she knew of, convinced her of this. Whatever hopes she had conceived of me, were utterly dissipated: all my ways were disgustful to her.

This cut me to the heart. The guilty, I believe, in every case, less patiently bear the detecting truth, than the innocent do the degrading falsehood.

I bespoke her patience, while I took the liberty to account for this change, on my part. — I re-acknowledged the pride of my heart, which could not bear the thought of that want of preference in the heart of a Lady whom I hoped to call mine, which she had always manifested. Marriage, I said, was a state that was not to be entered upon with indifference on either side.

It is insolence, interrupted she, it is presumption, Sir, to expect tokens of value, without resolving to deserve them. You have no whining creature before you, Mr. Lovelace, overcome by weak motives, to love where there is no merit. Miss Howe can tell you, Sir, that I never loved the faults of my friend, nor ever wished her to love me for mine. It was a rule with us, not to spare each other. And would a man who has nothing but faults (for pray, Sir, what are your virtues?) expect that I should show a value for him? Indeed if I did, I should not deserve even his value; but ought to be despised by him.

Well have you, Madam, kept up to this noble

manner of thinking. You are in no danger of being despised for any marks of tenderness or favor shown to the man before you. You have been, perhaps, you'll think, laudably studious of making and taking occasions to declare, that it was far from being owing to your choice, that you had any thoughts of me. My whole soul, Madam, in all its errors, in all its wishes, in all its views, had been laid open and naked before you, had I been encouraged by such a share in your confidence and esteem, as would have secured me against your apprehended worst constructions of what I should from time to time have revealed to you, and consulted you upon. For never was there a franker heart; nor a man so ready to accuse himself (this, Belford, is true). But you know, Madam, how much otherwise it has been between us. Doubt, distance, reserve, on your part, begat doubt, fear, awe, on mine. How little confidence! as if we apprehended each other to be a plotter rather than a lover. How have I dreaded every letter that has been brought you from Wilson's! And with reason; since the last, from which I expected so much, on account of the proposals I had made you in writing, has, if I may judge by the effects, and by your denial of seeing me yesterday (though you could go abroad, and in a chair too, to avoid my attendance on you) set you against me more than ever.

I was guilty, it seems, of going to church, said the indignant charmer; and without the company of a man, whose choice it would not have been to go, had I not gone — I was guilty of desiring to have

the whole Sunday to myself, after I had obliged you against my will, at a play; and after you had detained me (equally to my dislike) to a very late hour over night.—These were my faults; for these I was to be punished: I was to be compelled to see you, and to be terrified when I did see you, by the most shocking ill humor that was ever shown to a creature in my circumstances, and not bound to bear it. You have pretended to find free fault with my father's temper, Mr. Lovelace: but the worst that he ever showed after marriage, was not in the least to be compared to what you have shown twenty times beforehand.—And what are my prospects with you, at the very best?—My indignation rises against you, Mr. Lovelace, while I speak to you, when I recollect the many instances, equally ungenerous and unpolite, of your behaviour to one whom you have brought into distress—And I can hardly bear you in my sight.

She then turned from me, standing up, and lifting up her folded hands, and charming eyes swimming in tears, O my father, said the inimitable creature, you might have spared your heavy curse, had you known how I have been punished, ever since my swerving feet led me out of your garden-doors to meet this man!—Then, sinking into her chair, a burst of passionate tears forced their way down her glowing cheeks.

My dearest life, taking her still folded hands in mine, who can bear an invocation so affecting, tho' so passionate?

And as I hope to live, my nose tingled, as I once,

when a boy, remember it did (and indeed once more very lately) just before some tears came into my eyes; and I durst hardly trust my face in view of hers.

What have I done to deserve this impatient exclamation?—Have I, at any time, by words, by deeds, by looks, given you cause to doubt my honor, my reverence, my adoration, I may call it, of your virtues? All is owing to misapprehension, I hope, on both sides. Condescend to clear up but your part, as I will mine, and all must speedily be happy.—Would to heaven I loved that Heaven as I love you! And yet, if I doubted a return in love, let me perish if I should know how to wish you mine! Give me hope, dearest creature, give me but hope, that I am your preferable choice!—Give me but hope, that you hate me not; that you do not despise me.

O Mr. Lovelace, we have been long enough together, to be tired of each others humors and ways; ways and humors so different, that, perhaps, you ought to dislike me, as much as I do you. I think, I think that I cannot make an answerable return to the value you profess for me. My temper is utterly ruined. You have given me an ill opinion of all mankind; of yourself in particular: and withal so bad a one of myself, that I shall never be able to look up, having utterly and for ever lost all that self-complacency, and conscious pride, which are so necessary to carry a woman through this life with tolerable satisfaction to herself.

She paused. I was silent. By my soul, thought I, this sweet creature will at last undo me!

She proceeded. — What now remains, but that you pronounce me free of all obligation to you? And that you hinder me not from pursuing the destiny that shall be allotted to me?

Again she paused. I was still silent; meditating whether to renounce all further designs upon her; whether I had not received sufficient evidence of a virtue, and of a greatness of soul, that could not be questioned or impeached.

She went on: Propitious to me be your silence, Mr. Lovelace! — Tell me, that I am free of all obligation to you. You know I never made you promises. You know that you are not under any to me. My broken fortunes I matter not —

She was proceeding — My dearest life, said I, I have been all this time, tho' you fill me with doubts of your favor, busy in the nuptial preparations. I am actually in treaty for equipage.

Equipage, Sir! — Trappings, tinsel! — What is equipage; what is life; what is any thing; to a creature sunk so low as I am in my own opinion! — Laboring under a father's curse! — Unable to look backward without self-reproach, or forward without terror! These reflections strengthened by every cross accident! And what but cross accidents befall me! All my darling schemes dashed in pieces; all my hopes at an end; deny me not the liberty to refuge myself in some obscure corner, where neither the enemies you have made me, nor the few friends you have left me, may ever hear of the supposed rash one, till those happy moments are at hand, which shall expiate for all!

I had not a word to say for myself. Such a war in my mind had I never known. Gratitude, and admiration of the excellent creature before me, combating with villanous habit, with resolutions so premeditatedly made, and with views so much gloried in! — A hundred new contrivances in my head, and in my heart, that, to be honest, as it is called, must all be given up, by a heart delighting in intrigue and difficulty — Miss Howe's virulences endeavoured to be recollected — Yet recollection refusing to bring them forward with the requisite efficacy — I had certainly been a lost man, had not Dorcas come seasonably in, with a letter. — On the superscription written — Be pleased, Sir, to open it now.

I retired to the window — opened it — it was from Dorcas herself. — These the contents — “Be pleased to detain my Lady: a paper of importance to transcribe. I will cough when I have done.”

I put the paper in my pocket, and turned to my charmer, less disconcerted, as she, by that time, had also a little recovered herself. — One favor, dearest creature — Let me but know, whether Miss Howe approves or disapproves of my proposals? — I know her to be my enemy. I was intending to account to you for the change of behaviour you accused me of at the beginning of this conversation; but was diverted from it by your vehemence. Indeed, my beloved creature, you were very vehement. Do you think, it must not be matter of high regret to me, to find my wishes so often delayed and postponed in favor of your predominant view

to a reconciliation with relations who will not be reconciled to you? — To this was owing your declining to celebrate our nuptials before we came to town, though you were so atrociously treated by your sister, and your whole family; and though so ardently pressed to celebrate by me. To this was owing the ready offence you took at my four friends; and at the unavailing attempt I made to see a dropt letter; little imagining from what two such Ladies could write to each other, that there could be room for mortal displeasure. To this was owing the week's distance you held me at, till you knew the issue of another application. But when they had rejected that, when you had sent my coldly-received proposals to Miss Howe for her approbation or advice, as indeed I advised; and had honored me with your company at the play on Saturday night (my whole behaviour unobjectible to the last hour); must not, Madam, the sudden change in your conduct the very next morning, astonish and distress me? And this persisted in with still stronger declarations, after you had received the impatiently expected letter from Miss Howe; must I not conclude, that all was owing to her influence; and that some other application or project was meditating, that made it necessary to keep me again at distance till the result were known, and which was to deprive me of you for ever? for was not that your constantly proposed preliminary? Well, Madam, might I be wrought up to a half-phrensy by this apprehension; and well might I charge you with hating me. — And now, dearest creature, let me

know, I once more ask you, what is Miss Howe's opinion of my proposals?

Were I disposed to debate with you, Mr. Lovelace, I could very easily answer your fine harangue. But at present, I shall only say, that your ways have been very unaccountable. You seem to me, if your meanings were always just, to have taken great pains to embarrass them. Whether owing in you to the want of a clear head, or a sound heart, I cannot determine; but it is to the want of one of them, I verily think, that I am to ascribe the greatest part of your strange conduct.

Curse upon the heart of the little devil, said I, who instigates you to think so hardly of the faithfullest heart in the world!

How dare you, Sir? — And there she stopt; having almost overshot herself; as I designed she should.

How dare I what, Madam? And I looked with meaning. How dare I what?

Vile man! — And do you — And there again she stopt.

Do I what, Madam? And why vile man?

How dare you to curse any body in my presence?

O the sweet receder! But that was not to go off so with a Lovelace.

Why then, dearest creature, is there any body that instigates you? If there be, again I curse them, be they whom they will.

She was in a charming pretty passion. — And this was the first time that I had the odds in my favor.

Well, Madam, it is just as I thought. And now I know how to account for a temper that I hope is not natural to you.

Artful wretch! And is it thus you would entrap me? — But know, Sir, that I receive letters from nobody but Miss Howe. Miss Howe likes some of your ways as little as I do, for I have set every thing before her. Yet she is thus far your enemy, as she is mine — She thinks I should not refuse your offers; but endeavour to make the best of my lot. And now you have the truth. Would to heaven you were capable of dealing with equal sincerity!

I am, Madam. And here, on my knee, I renew my vows, and my supplication, that you will make me yours — Yours for ever. — And let me have cause to bless you and Miss Howe in the same breath.

To say the truth, Belford, I had before begun to think, that the vixen of a girl, who certainly likes not Hickman, was in love with me.

Rise, Sir, from your too ready knees; and mock me not.

Too ready knees, thought I! — Though this humble posture so little affects this proud beauty, she knows not how much I have obtained of others of her sex, nor how often I have been forgiven for the last attempts, by kneeling.

Mock you, Madam! And I arose, and re-urged her for the day. I blamed myself at the same time, for the invitation I had given to Lord M. as it might subject me to delay from his infirmities: but told her, that I would write to him to excuse me, if she had no objection; or to give him the day she would

give me, and not wait for him, if he could not come in time.

My day, Sir, said she, is never. Be not surpris'd. A person of politeness judging between us, would not be surpris'd that I say so. But, indeed, Mr. Lovelace (and wept through impatience) you either know not how to treat with a mind of the least degree of delicacy, notwithstanding your birth and education, or you are an ungrateful man; and (after a pause) a worse than ungrateful one. But I will retire. I will see you again to morrow. I cannot before. I think I hate you — You may look — Indeed I think I hate you. And if, upon a re-examination of my own heart, I find I do, I would not for the world that matters should go on farther between us.

But I see, I see, she does not hate me! — How it would mortify my vanity, if I thought there was a woman in the world, much more this, that could hate me! — 'Tis evident, villain as she thinks me, that I should not be an odious villain, if I could but at last in one instance cease to be a villain! She could not hold it, determin'd as she had thought herself, I saw by her eyes, the moment I endeavour'd to dissipate her apprehensions, on my too ready knees, as she calls them. The moment the rough covering that my teasing behaviour has thrown over her affections is quite removed, I doubt not to find all silk and silver at bottom, all soft, bright, and charming.

I was, however, too much vexed, disconcerted,

mortified, to hinder her from retiring — And yet she had not gone, if Dorcas had not coughed.

The wench came in, as soon as her Lady had retired, and gave me the copy she had taken. And what should it be but of the answer the truly admirable creature had intended to give to my written proposals in relation to settlements?

I have but just dipt into this affecting paper. Were I to read it attentively, not a wink should I sleep this night. To morrow it shall obtain my serious consideration.

LETTER XXXVI.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

Tuesday Morning, *May 23.*

THE dear creature desires to be excused seeing me till evening. She is not very well, as Dorcas tells me.

Read here, if thou wilt, the paper transcribed by Dorcas. It is impossible that I should proceed with my projects against this admirable woman, were it not that I am resolved, after a few trials more, if as nobly sustained as those she has already passed through, to make her (if she really hate me not) legally mine.

To Mr. LOVELACE.

“**W**HEN a woman is married, that supreme earthly obligation requires that in all instances where her husband's real honor is concerned, she should yield her own will to his. But, beforehand, I could be glad, conformably to what I have always signified, to have the most explicit assurances, that every possible way should be tried to avoid litigation with my father. Time and patience will subdue all things. My prospects of happiness are extremely contracted. A husband's right will be always the same. In my life-time I could wish nothing to be done of this sort. Your circumstances, Sir, will not oblige you to extort violently from him what is in his hands. All that depends upon me, either with regard to my person, to my diversions, or to the oeconomy that no married woman, of whatever rank or quality, should be above inspecting, shall be done, to prevent a necessity for such measures being taken. And if there will be no necessity for them, it is to be hoped that motives less excusable will not have force — Motives which must be founded in a littleness of mind, which a woman, who has not that littleness of mind, will be under such temptations as her duty will hardly be able at all times to check, to despise her husband for having; especially in cases where her own family, so much a part of herself, and which will have obligations

upon her (though then but secondary ones) from which she can never be freed, is intimately concerned.

“ This article, then, I urge to your most serious consideration, as what lies next my heart. I enter not here minutely into the fatal misunderstanding between them and you: the fault may be in both. But, Sir, yours was the foundation fault: at least, you gave a too plausible pretence for my brother’s antipathy to work upon. Condescension was no part of your study. You chose to bear the imputations laid to your charge, rather than to make it your endeavour to obviate them.

“ But this may lead into hateful recrimination — Let it be remembered, I will only say, in this place, that, in their eye, you have robbed them of a daughter they doted upon; and that their resentments on this occasion rise but in proportion to their love, and their disappointment. If they were faulty in some of the measures they took, while they themselves did not think so, who shall judge for them? You, Sir, who will judge every body as you please, and will let nobody judge you, in your own particular, must not be their judge.— It may, therefore, be expected, that they will stand out.

“ As for myself, Sir, I must leave it (so seems it to be destined) to your justice, to treat me as you shall think I deserve: but if your future behaviour to them is not governed by that harsh sounding implacableness, which you charge upon some of their tempers, the splendor of your family, and
the

the excellent character of some of them (of all indeed, unless your own conscience furnishes you with one only exception) will, on better consideration, do every thing with them: for they may be overcome; perhaps, however, with the more difficulty, as the greatly prosperous less bear control and disappointment than others: for I will own to you, that I have often in secret lamented that their great acquirements have been a snare to them; perhaps as great a snare, as some other accidentals have been to you; which being less immediately your own gifts, you have still less reason than they to value yourself upon them.

“ Let me only, on this subject, further observe, that condescension is not meanness. There is a glory in yielding, that hardly any violent spirit can judge of. My brother perhaps is no more sensible of this than you. But as you have talents which he has not (who, however, has, as I hope, that regard for morals, the want of which makes one of his objections to you) I could wish it may not be owing to you, that your mutual dislikes to each other do not subside; for it is my earnest hope, that in time you may see each other, without exciting the fears of a wife and a sister for the consequence. Not that I should wish you to yield in points that truly concerned your honor: no, Sir; I would be as delicate in such, as you yourself: more delicate, I will venture to say, because more uniformly so. How vain, how contemptible, is that pride, which shows itself in standing upon

diminutive observances; and gives up, and makes a jest of, the most important duties!

“ This article being considered as I wish, all the rest will be easy. Were I to accept of the handsome separate provision you seem to intend me; added to the considerable sums arisen from my grandfather's estate since his death (more considerable, than perhaps you may suppose from your offer); I should think it my duty to lay up for the family good, and for unforeseen events, out of it: for, as to my donations, I would generally confine myself in them to the tenth of my income, be it what it would. I aim at no glare in what I do of that sort. All I wish for, is the power of relieving the lame, the blind, the sick, and the industrious poor, and those whom accident has made so, or sudden distress reduced. The common or bred beggars I leave to others, and to the public provision. They cannot be lower: perhaps they wish not to be higher: and, not able to do for every one, I aim not at works of supererogation. Two hundred pounds a year would do all I wish to do of the separate sort: for all above, I would content myself to ask you; except, mistrusting your own œconomy, you would give up to my management and keeping, in order to provide for future contingencies, a larger portion; for which, as your steward, I would regularly account.

“ As to clothes, I have particularly two suits, which, having been only in a manner tried on, would answer for any present occasion. Jewels I

have of my grandmother's, which want only new-setting: another set I have, which on particular days I used to wear. Altho' these are not sent me, I have no doubt, being merely personals, but they will, when I send for them in another name: till when I should not chuse to wear any.

“ As to your complaints of my diffidences, and the like, I appeal to your own heart, if it be possible for you to make my case your own for one moment, and to retrospect some parts of your behaviour, words, and actions, whether I am not rather to be justified than censured: and whether, of all men in the world, avowing what you avow, you ought not to think so. If you do not, let me admonish you, Sir, from the very great mismatch, that then must appear to be in our minds, never to seek, nor so much as wish, to bring about the most intimate union of interests between yourself and

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

May 20.

The original of this charming paper, as Dorcas tells me, was torn almost in two. In one of her pets, I suppose! What business have the sex, whose principal glory is meekness, and patience, and resignation, to be in a passion, I trow? — Will not she, who allows herself such liberties as a maiden, take greater when married?

And a wife to be in a passion! — Let me tell the Ladies, it is an impudent thing, begging their pardon, and as imprudent, as impudent for a wife to be in a passion, if she mean not eternal separation, or wicked defiance, by it: for is it not rejecting at once all that expostulatory meekness, and gentle reasoning, mingled with sighs as gentle, and graced with bent knees, supplicating hands, and eyes lifted up to your imperial countenance, just running over, that should make a reconciliation speedy, and as lasting as speedy? Even suppose the husband is in the wrong, will not his being so, give the greater force to her expostulation?

Now I think of it, a man should be in the wrong now and then, to make his wife shine. Miss Howe tells my charmer, that adversity is her shining-time. 'Tis a generous thing in a man, to make his wife shine at his own expense: to give her leave to triumph over him by patient reasoning: for were he to be too imperial to acknowledge his fault on the spot, she will find the benefit of her duty and submission in future, and in the high opinion he will conceive of her prudence and obligingness — And so, by degrees, she will become her master's master.

But for a wife to come up with a kemboed arm, the other hand thrown out, perhaps with a pointing finger — Look ye here, Sir! — Take notice! — If you are wrong, I'll be wrong! — If you are in a passion, I'll be in a passion! — Rebuff, for rebuff, Sir! — If you fly, I'll tear! — If you swear, I'll curse! — And the same room, and the same bed, shall not hold us, Sir!

—For, remember, I am married, Sir! — I am a wife, Sir! — You can't help yourself, Sir! — Your honor, as well as your peace, is in my keeping! — And, if you like not this treatment, you may have worse, Sir!

Ah! Jack! Jack! What man, who has observed these things, either implied, or expressed, in other families, would wish to be a husband!

Dorcas found this paper in one of the drawers of her Lady's dressing-table. She was reperusing it, as she supposes, when the honest wench carried my message to desire her to favor me at the tea-table; for she saw her pop a paper into the drawer as she came in; and there, on her mistress's going to meet me in the diningroom, she found it; and to be this.

But I had better not to have had a copy of it, as far as I know: for, determined as I was before upon my operations, it instantly turned all my resolutions in her favor. Yet I would give something to be convinced, that she did not pop it into her drawer before the wench, in order for me to see it; and perhaps (if I were to take notice of it) to discover whether Dorcas, according to Miss Howe's advice, were most my friend, or hers.

The very suspicion of this will do her no good: for I cannot bear to be artfully dealt with. People love to enjoy their own peculiar talents in monopoly, as I may say. I am aware, that it will strengthen thy arguments against me in her behalf. But I know every tittle thou canst say upon it. Spare, therefore, thy wambling nonsense, I desire thee;

and leave this sweet excellence and me to our fate: that will determine for us, as it shall please itself: for, as Cowley says,

An unseen hand makes all our moves:

And some are great, and some are small;

Some climb to good, some from good fortune fall:

Some wise men, and some fools we call:

Figures, alas! of speech!—For destiny plays us all.

But after all, I am sorry, almost sorry (for how shall I do to be quite sorry, when it is not given to me to be so?) that I cannot, until I have made further trials, resolve upon wedlock.

I have just read over again this intended answer to my proposals: and how I adore her for it!

But yet; another yet! — She has not given it or sent it to me. — It is not, therefore, her answer. It is not written for me, though to me.

Nay, she has not intended to send it to me: she has even torn it, perhaps with indignation, as thinking it too good for me. By this action she absolutely retracts it. Why then does my foolish fondness seek to establish for her the same merit in my heart, as if she avowed it? Pr'ythee, dear Belford, once more, leave us to our fate; and do not thou interpose with thy nonsense, to weaken a spirit already too squeamish, and strengthen a conscience that has declared itself of her party.

Then again, remember thy recent discoveries, Lovelace! Remember her indifference, attended with all the appearance of contempt and hatred.

View her, even now, wrapt up in reserve and mystery; meditating plots, as far as thou knowest, against the sovereignty thou hast, by right of conquest, obtained over her. Remember, in short, all thou hast threatened to remember against this insolent beauty, who is a rebel to the power she has listed under.

But yet, how dost thou propose to subdue thy sweet enemy? — Abhorred be force, be the necessity of force, if that can be avoided! There is no triumph in force — No conquest over the will — No prevailing, by gentle degrees, over the gentle passions! Force is the devil!

My cursed character, as I have often said, was against me at setting-out — Yet is she not a woman? Cannot I find one yielding or but half-yielding moment, if she do not absolutely hate me?

But with what can I tempt her? — Riches she was born to, and despises, knowing what they are. Jewels and ornaments, to a mind so much a jewel, and so richly set, her worthy consciousness will not let her value. Love — If she be susceptible of love, it seems to be so much under the direction of prudence, that one unguarded moment, I fear, cannot be reasonably hoped for: and so much vigilance, so much apprehensiveness, that her fears are ever aforehand with her dangers. Then her love of virtue seems to be principle, native principle, or, if not native, so deeply rooted, that its fibres have struck into her heart, and, as she grew up, so blended and twisted themselves with the strings of

life, that I doubt there is no separating of the one without cutting the others asunder.

What then can be done to make such a matchless creature get over the first tests, in order to put her to the grand proof, whether once overcome, she will not be always overcome?

Our mother and her nymphs say, I am a perfect craven, and no Lovelace: and so I think. But this is no simpering, smiling charmer, as I have found others to be, when I have touched upon affecting subjects at a distance; as once or twice I have tried to her, the mother introducing them (to make sex palliate the freedom to sex) when only we three together. She is above the affectation of not seeming to understand you. She shows by her displeasure, and a fierceness not natural to her eye, that she judges of an impure heart by an impure mouth, and darts dead at once even the embryo hopes of an encroaching lover, however distantly insinuated, before the meaning hint can dawn into double entendre.

By my faith, Jack, as I sit gazing upon her, my whole soul in my eyes, contemplating her perfections, and thinking, when I have seen her easy and serene, what would be her thoughts, did she know my heart as well as I know it; when I behold her disturbed and jealous, and think of the justness of her apprehensions, and that she cannot fear so much, as there is room for her to fear; my heart often misgives me.

And must, think I, O creature so divinely excellent, and so beloved of my soul, those arms, those

incircling arms, that would make a monarch happy, be used to repel brutal force; all their strength, unavailingly, perhaps, exerted to repel it, and to defend a person so delicately framed? Can violence enter into the heart of a wretch, who might entitle himself to all her willing, yet virtuous love, and make the blessings he aspires after, her duty to confer?—Begone villain purposes! Sink ye all to the hell that could only inspire ye! And I am then ready to throw myself at her feet, to confess my villanous designs, to avow my repentance, and to put it out of my power to act unworthily by such an excellence.

How then comes it, that all these compassionate, and, as some would call them, honest sensibilities go off?—Why, Miss Howe will tell thee: she says, I am the devil. By my conscience I think he has at present a great share in me.

There's ingenuousness!—How I lay myself open to thee! But feest thou not, that the more I say against myself, the less room is there for thee to take me to task?—O Belford, Belford! I cannot, cannot (at least at present) I cannot marry.

Then her family, my bitter enemies—To supple to them, or, if I do not, to make her as unhappy as she can be from my attempts—

Then does she not love them too much, me too little?

She now seems to despise me: Miss Howe declares, that she really does despise me. To be despised by a wife;—What a thought is that!—To be excelled by a wife too, in every part of praise-worthy

knowledge! To take lessons, to take instructions, from a wife! More than despise me, she herself has taken time to consider whether she does not hate me: I hate you, Lovelace, with my whole heart, said she to me but yesterday! My soul is above thee, man! Urge me not to tell thee, how sincerely I think my soul above thee!—How poor, indeed, was I then; even in my own heart!—So visible a superiority, to so proud a spirit as mine! And here from below, from below indeed! from these women! I am so goaded on—

Yet 'tis poor too, to think myself a machine in the hands of such wretches. I am no machine. Lovelace, thou art base to thyself, but to suppose thyself a machine.

But having gone thus far, I should be unhappy, if, after marriage, in the petulance of ill humor, I had it to reproach myself, that I did not try her to the utmost. And yet I don't know how it is, but this Lady, the moment I come into her presence, half-assimilates me to her own virtue. Once or twice (to say nothing of her triumph over me on Sunday night) I was prevailed upon to fluster myself, with an intention to make some advances, which, if obliged to recede, I might lay upon raised spirits: but the instant I beheld her, I was soberized into awe and reverence: and the majesty of her even visible purity first damped, and then extinguished, my double flame.

What a surprisingly powerful effect, so much and so long in my power, she: so instigated by some of her own sex, and so stimulated by

passion, I! — How can this be accounted for, in a Lovelace!

But, what a heap of stuff have I written! How have I been run away with! By what? Canst thou say, by what? — O thou lurking varlet's Conscience! Is it thou, that hast thus made me of party against myself? How camest thou in? In what disguise, thou egregious haunter of my more agreeable hours? Stand thou, with fate, but neuter in this controversy; and, if I cannot do credit to human nature, and to the female sex, by bringing down such an angel as this to class with and adorn it (for adorn it she does in her very foibles) then I am all yours, and never will resist you more.

Here I arose. I shook myself. The window was open. Away the troublesome bosom-visitor, the intruder, is flown. I see it yet! — I see it yet! And now it lessens to my aching eye! And now the cleft air is closed after it, and it is out of sight! And once more I am

R. LOVELACE.

LETTER XXXVII.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

Tuesday, *May* 23.

WELL did I, and but just in time, conclude to have done with Mrs. Fetchville and the house: for here Mennell has declared, that he cannot in conscience and honor go any farther. He would not for the world be accessary to the deceiving of such a Lady! I was a fool to let either you or him see her; for ever since ye have both had scruples, which neither would have had, were a woman to have been in the question.

Well, I can't help it!

Mennell has, however, though with some reluctance, consented to write me a letter, provided I will allow it to be the last step he shall take in this affair.

I presumed, I told him, that if I could cause Mrs. Fetchville's woman to supply his place, he would have no objection to that.

None, he says. But is it not pity —

A pitiful fellow! Such a ridiculous kind of pity his, as those silly souls have, who would not kill an innocent chicken for the world, but when killed to their hands, are always the most greedy devourers of it.

Now this letter gives the servant the small pox: and she has given it to her unhappy vaporish Lady.

Vaporish people are perpetual subjects for diseases to work upon. Name but the malady, and it is theirs in a moment. Ever fitted for inoculation. The physical tribe's milch-cows. A vaporish or splenetic patient is a fiddle for the doctors; and they are eternally playing upon it. Sweet music does it make them. All their difficulty, except a case extraordinary happens (as poor Mrs. Fetchville's, who has realized her apprehensions) is but to hold their countenance, whilst their patient is drawing up a bill of indictment against himself; and when they have heard it, proceed to punish: the right word for prescribe. Why should they not, when the criminal has confessed his guilt? And punish they generally do with a vengeance.

Yet, silly toads too, now I think of it. For why, when they know they cannot do good, may they not as well endeavour to gratify, as to nauseate, the patient's palate?

Were I a physician, I'd get all the trade to myself: for Malmsey, and Cyprus, and the generous product of the Cape, a little disguised, should be my principal doses: as these would create new spirits, how would the revived patient covet the physic, and adore the doctor!

Give all the paraders of the faculty whom thou knowest this hint. There could but one inconvenience arise from it. The apothecaries would find their medicines cost them something: but the demand for quantities would answer that: since the honest nurse would be the patient's taster; perpetually requiring repetitions of the last cordial julap.

Well, but to the letter—Yet what need of further explanation after the hints in my former? The widow can't be removed; and that's enough: and Mennell's work is over; and his conscience left to plague him for his own sins, and not another man's: and very possibly, plague enough will it give him for those.

This letter is directed, “To Robert Lovelace, Esq; or, in his absence, To his Lady.” She had refused dining with me, or seeing me; and I was out when it came. She opened it: so is my Lady by her own consent, proud and saucy as she is.

I am glad at my heart that it came before we entirely make up. She would else, perhaps, have concluded it to be contrived for a delay: and now, moreover, we can accommodate our old and new quarrels together; and that's contrivance, you know. But how is her dear haughty heart humbled to what it was when I knew her first, that she can apprehend any delays from me; and have nothing to do but to vex at them!

I came in to dinner. She sent me down the letter, desiring my excuse for opening it. Did it before she was aware. Lady-pride, Belford! Recollection, then retrogradation!

I requested to see her upon it that moment. But she desires to suspend our interview till morning. I will bring her to own, before I have done with her that she cannot see me too often.

My impatience was so great, on an occasion so unexpected, that I could not help writing, to tell her, “How much vexed I was at the accident: but

that it need not delay my happy day, as that did not depend upon the house (she knew that before, she'll think, and so did I): and as Mrs. Fetchville, by Mr. Mennell, so handsomely expressed her concern upon it, and her wishes, that it could suit us to bear with the unavoidable delay, I hoped, that going down to the Lawn for two or three of the summer-months, when I was made the happiest of men, would be favorable to all round."

The dear creature takes this incident to heart, I believe: she has sent word to my repeated request to see her notwithstanding her denial, that she cannot till the morning: it shall be then at six o'clock, if I please!

To be sure I do please!

Can see her but once a day now, Jack!

Did I tell thee, that I wrote a letter to my cousin Montague, wondering that I heard not from Lord M. . . as the subject was so very interesting? In it I acquainted her with the house I was about taking; and with Mrs. Fetchville's vaporish delays.

I was very loth to engage my own family, either man or woman, in this affair; but I must take my measures securely: and already they all think as bad of me as they well can. You observe by my Lord M.'s letter to yourself, that the well manner'd Peer is afraid I shall play this admirable creature one of my usual dog's tricks.

I have received just now an answer from Charlotte.

Charlotte i'n't well. A stomach-disorder!

No wonder a girl's stomach should plague her. A single woman; that's it. When she has a man to plague, it will have something besides itself to prey upon. Knowest thou not moreover, that man is the woman's fun; woman is the man's earth?—How dreary, how desolate, the earth, that the sun shines not upon!

Poor Charlotte! But I heard she was not well: that encouraged me to write to her; and to express myself a little concerned, that she had not of her own accord thought of a visit in town to my charmer.

Here follows a copy of her letter. Thou wilt see by it, that every little monkey is to catechise me. They all depend upon my good nature.

M. . . Hall, *May 22.*

Dear cousin,

WE have been in daily hope for a long time, I must call it, of hearing that the happy knot was tied. My Lord has been very much out of order: and yet nothing would serve him, but he would himself write an answer to your letter. It was the only opportunity he should ever have, perhaps, to throw in a little good advice to you, with the hope of its being of any signification; and he has been several hours in a day, as his gout would let him, busied in it. It wants now only his last revival. He
hopes

hopes it will have the greater weight with you, if it appear all in his own hand-writing.

Indeed, Mr. Lovelace, his worthy heart is wrapt up in you. I wish you loved yourself but half as well. But I believe too, that if all the family loved you less, you would love yourself more.

His Lordship has been very busy, at the times he could not write, in consulting Pritchard about those estates, which he proposes to transfer to you on the happy occasion, that he may answer your letter in the most acceptable manner; and show, by effects, how kindly he takes your invitation. I assure you, he is mighty proud of it.

As for myself, I am not at all well, and have not been for some weeks past, with my old stomach disorder. I had certainly else before now have done myself the honor you wonder I have not done myself. Lady Betty, who would have accompanied me (for we had laid it all out) has been exceedingly busy in her law affair; her antagonist, who is actually on the spot, having been making proposals for an accommodation. But you may assure yourself, that when our dear relation-elect shall be entered upon the new habitation you tell me of, we will do ourselves the honor of visiting her; and if any delay arises from the dear Lady's want of courage (which, considering her man, let me tell you, may very well be) we will endeavour to inspire her with it, and be sponsors for you;—for, cousin, I believe you have need to be christened over again before you are entitled to so great a blessing. What think you?

Just now, my Lord tells me, he will dispatch a man on purpose with his letter to morrow: so I needed not to have written. But now I have, let it go, and by Empson, who sets out directly on his return to town.

My best compliments, and sister's, to the most deserving Lady in the world (you will need no other direction to the person meant) conclude me

Your affectionate cousin and servant,

CHARL. MONTAGUE.

Thou seest how seasonably this letter comes. I hope my Lord will write nothing but what I may show to my beloved. I have actually sent her up this letter of Charlotte's; and hope for happy effects from it.

R. L.

The Lady, in her next letter, gives Miss Howe an account of what has passed between Mr. Lovelace and herself. She resents his behaviour with her usual dignity: but when she comes to mention Mr. Mennell's letter, she re-urges Miss Howe to perfect her scheme for her deliverance; being resolved to leave him. But, dating again, on his sending up to her Miss Montague's letter, she alters her

mind, and desires her to suspend for the present her application to Mrs. Townsend.

I had begun, says she, to suspect all he had said of Mrs. Fetchville and her house; and even Mr. Mennell himself, tho' so well appearing a man. But now that I find Mr. Lovelace had apprised his relations of his intention to take it, and had engaged some of the Ladies to visit me there; I could hardly forbear blaming myself for censuring him as capable of so vile an imposture. But may he not thank himself for acting so very unaccountably, and taking such needlessly-awry steps as he has done, embarrassing, as I told him, his own meanings, if they were good?

LETTER XXXVIII.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

Wednesday, *May 24.*

He gives his friend an account of their interview that morning; and of the happy effects of his cousin Montague's letter in his favor. Her reserves, however, he tells him, are not absolutely banished. But this he imputes to form.

IT is not in the power of woman, says he, to be altogether sincere on these occasions. But why?—Do they think it so great a disgrace to be found out to be really what they are?

I regretted the illness of Mrs. Fetchville; as the intention I had to fix her dear self in the house before the happy knot was tied, would have set her in that independance in appearance, as well as fact, which was necessary to show to all the world, that her choice was free; and as the Ladies of my family would have been proud to make their court to her there; while the settlements and our equipages were preparing. But on any other account, there was no great matter in it, since when my happy day was over, we could, with so much convenience, go down to the Lawn, to my Lord M.'s, and to Lady Sarah's or Lady Betty's, in turn; which would give full time to provide ourselves with servants, and other accommodations.

How sweetly the charmer listened!

I asked her, if she had had the small-pox?

Ten thousand pounds the worse in my estimation, thought I, if she has not; for not one of her charming graces can I dispense with.

'Twas always a doubtful point with her mother and Mrs. Norton, she owned. But altho' she was not afraid of it, she chose not unnecessarily to rush into places where it was.

Right, thought I—Else, I said, it would not have been amiss for her to see the house before she went into the country; for, if she liked it not, I was not obliged to have it.

She asked, if she might take a copy of Miss Montague's letter?

I said, she might keep the letter itself, and send

it to Miss Howe, if she pleased; for that, I supposed, was her intention.

She bowed her head to me.

There, Jack!—I shall have her courtesy to me by and by, I question not. What a devil had I to do, to terrify the dear creature by my termagant projects!—Yet it was not amiss, I believe, to make her afraid of me. She says, I am an unpolite man—And every polite instance from such a one, is deemed a favor.

Talking of the settlements, I told her, I had rather that Pritchard (mentioned by my cousin Charlotte) had not been consulted on this occasion. Pritchard, indeed, was a very honest man; and had been for a generation in the family; and knew the estates, and the condition of them, better than either my Lord or myself: but Pritchard, like other old men, was diffident and slow; and valued himself upon his skill as a draughtsman; and for the sake of that paltry reputation, must have all his forms preserved, were an imperial crown to depend upon his dispatch.

I kissed her unrepulsing hand no less than five times during this conversation. Lord, Jack, how my generous heart ran over!—She was quite obliging at parting.—She in a manner asked me leave to retire; to re-peruse Charlotte's letter.—I think she bent her knees to me; but I won't be sure.—How happy might we have both been long ago, had the dear creature been always as complaisant to me! For I do love respect, and, whether I deserved it or not, always had it, till I knew this proud beauty.

And now, Belford, are we in a train, or the deuce is in it. Every fortified town has its strong and its weak place. I had carried on my attacks against the impregnable parts. I have no doubt but I shall either shine or smuggle her out of her cloak, since she and Miss Howe have intended to employ a smuggler against me. — All we wait for now is my Lord's letter.

But I had like to have forgot to tell thee, that we have been not a little alarmed, by some inquiries that have been made after me and my beloved, by a man of good appearance; who yesterday procured a tradesman in the neighbourhood to send for Dorcas: of whom he asked several questions relating to us; and particularly (as we boarded and lodged in one house) whether we were married?

This has given my beloved great uneasiness. And I could not help observing upon it, to her, how right a thing it was, that we had given out below, that we were married. The inquiry, most probably, I said, was from her brother's quarter; and now, perhaps, that our marriage was owned, we should hear no more of his machinations. The person, it seems, was curious to know the day that the ceremony was performed. But Dorcas refused to give him any other particulars, than that we were married; and she was the more reserved, as he declined to tell her the motives of his inquiry.

LETTER XXXIX.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

May 24.

THE devil take this uncle of mine! He has at last sent me a letter, which I cannot show, without exposing the head of our family for a fool. A confounded parcel of pop-guns has he let off upon me. I was in hopes he had exhausted his whole stock of this sort in his letter to you. To keep it back, to delay sending it, till he had recollected all this farrago of nonsense——Confound his wisdom of nations, if so much of it is to be scraped together, in disgrace of itself, to make one egregious simpleton!—But I am glad I am fortified with this piece of flagrant folly, however; since, in all human affairs, the convenient and inconvenient, the good and the bad, are so mingled, that there is no having the one without the other.

I have already offered the bill inclosed in it to my beloved; and read to her part of the letter. But she refused the bill: and as I am in cash myself, I shall return it. She seemed very desirous to peruse the whole letter. And when I told her, that were it not for exposing the writer, I would oblige her, she said, It would not be exposing his Lordship to show it to her; and that she always preferred the heart to the head. I knew her meaning; but did not thank her for it.

All that makes for me in it, I will transcribe for her—Yet hang it, she shall have the letter, and my soul with it, for one consenting kiss.

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She has got the letter from me without the reward. Deuce take me, if I had the courage to propose the condition. A new character this of bashfulness in thy friend. I see, that a truly modest woman may make even a confident man keep his distance. By my soul, Belford, I believe, that nine women in ten, who fall, fall either from their own vanity, or levity, or for want of circumspection, and proper reserves.

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I did intend to take my reward on her returning a letter so favorable to us both. But she sent it to me, sealed up, by Dorcas. I might have thought that there were two or three hints in it, that she would be too nice immediately to appear to. I send it to thee; and here will stop, to give thee time to read it. Return it as soon as thou hast perused it.

LETTER XL.

Lord M. . To ROBERT LOVELACE, Esq;

Tuesday, *May* 23.

IT is a long lane that has no turning—Do not despise me for my proverbs—You know I was always fond of them; and if you had been so too, it would have been the better for you, let me tell you. I dare swear, the fine Lady you are so likely to be soon happy with, will be far from despising them; for I am told, that she writes well, and that all her letters are full of sentences. God convert you! for nobody but He and this Lady can.

I have no manner of doubt now but that you will marry, as your father, and all your ancestors, did before you: else you would have had no title to be my heir; nor can your descendents have any title to be yours, unless they are legitimate; that's worth your remembrance, Sir!—No man is always a fool, every man sometimes.—But your follies, I hope, are now at an end.

I know, you have vowed revenge against this fine Lady's family: but no more of that, now. You must look upon them all as your relations; and forgive, and forget. And when they see you make a good husband and a good father (which God send, for all our sakes!) they will wonder at their nonsensical antipathy, and beg your pardon: but while they think you are a vile fellow, and a

rake, how can they either love you, or excuse their daughter?

And methinks I could wish to give a word of comfort to the Lady, who doubtless, must be under great fears, how she shall be able to hold-in such a wild creature, as you have hitherto been. I would hint to her, that, by strong arguments, and gentle words, she may do any thing with you; for though you are too apt to be hot, gentle words will cool you, and bring you into the temper that is necessary for your cure.

Would to God, my poor Lady, your aunt, who is dead and gone, had been a proper patient for the same remedy! God rest her soul! No reflections upon her memory! — Worth is best known by want! — I know hers now; and if I had went first, she would by this time have known mine.

There is great wisdom in that saying, God send me a friend, that may tell me of my faults: if not, an enemy; and he will. Not that I am your enemy; and that you well know. The more noble any one is, the more humble: so bear with me, if you would be thought noble. — Am I not your uncle? And do I not design to be better to you than your father could be? Nay, I will be your father too, when the happy day comes; since you desire it: and pray make my compliments to my dear niece; and tell her, I wonder much that she has so long deferred your happiness.

Pray let her know as that I will present her (not you) either my Lancashire seat, or the Lawn in Hertfordshire; and settle upon her a thousand pounds a

year penny-rents; to show her, that we are not a family to take base advantages: and you may have writings drawn, and settle as you will. — Honest Pritchard has the rent-roll of both these estates; and as he has been a good old servant, I recommend him to your Lady's favor. I have already consulted him: he will tell you what is best for you, and most pleasing to me.

I am still very bad with my gout; but will come in a litter, as soon as the day is fixed: it would be the joy of my heart to join your hands. And, let me tell you, if you do not make the best of husbands to so good a young Lady, and one who has had so much courage for your sake, I will renounce you; and settle all I can upon her and hers by you, and leave you out of the question.

If any thing be wanting for your further security, I am ready to give it; though you know, that my word has always been looked upon as my bond. And when the Harlowes know all this, let us see whether they are able to blush, and take shame to themselves.

Lady Sarah and Lady Betty want only to know the day, to make all the country round them blaze, and all their tenants mad. And, if any one of mine be sober upon the occasion, Pritchard shall eject him. And, on the birth of the first child, if a son, I will do something more for you, and repeat all our rejoicings.

I ought, indeed, to have written sooner. But I knew, that if you thought me long, and were in haste as to your nuptials, you would write and tell

me so. But my gout was very troublesome: and I am but a slow writer, you know, at best: for composing is a thing, that though formerly I was very ready at it (as my Lord Lexington used to say); yet having left it off a great while, I am not so now. And I chose, on this occasion, to write all out of my own head and memory; and to give you my best advice; for I may never have such an opportunity again. You have had (God mend you!) a strange way of turning your back upon all I have said: this once, I hope, you will be more attentive to the advice I give you for your own good.

I had still another end; nay, two other ends.

The one was, That now you are upon the borders of wedlock, as I may say, and all your wild oats will be sown, I would give you some instructions as to your public as well as private behaviour in life; which, intending you so much good as I do, you ought to hear; and, perhaps, would never have listened to, on any less extraordinary occasion.

The second is, That your dear Lady-elect (who is it seems herself so fine and so sententious a writer) will see by this, that it is not our faults, nor for want of the best advice, that you was not a better man than you have hitherto been.

And now, in few words, for the conduct I would wish you to follow in public, as well as in private, if you would think me worthy of advising.—It shall be short; so be not uneasy.

As to the private life: Love your Lady as she deserves. Let your actions praise you. Be a good

husband; and so give the lie to all your enemies; and make them ashamed of their scandals: and let us have pride in saying, that Miss Harlowe has not done either herself or family any discredit by coming among us. Do this; and I, and Lady Sarah, and Lady Betty, will love you for ever.

As to your public conduct—This as follows is what I could wish: but I reckon your Lady's wisdom will put us both right—No disparagement, Sir; since, with all your wit, you have not hitherto shown much wisdom, you know.

Get into Parliament as soon as you can: for you have talents to make a great figure there. Who so proper to assist in making new holding laws, as those whom no law in being could hold?

Then, for so long as you will give attendance in St. Stephen's chapel—Its being called a chapel, I hope, will not disgust you: I am sure I have known many a riot there:—A Speaker has a hard time of it! But we Peers have more decorum—But what was I going to say?—I must go back.

For so long as you will give your attendance in Parliament, for so long will you be out of mischief; out of private mischief, at least: and may St. Stephen's fate be yours, if you wilfully do public mischief!

When a new election comes, you will have two or three Boroughs, you know, to chuse out of:—But if you stay till then, I had rather you were for the Shire.

You will have interest enough, I am sure; and being so handsome a man, the women will make their husbands vote for you.

I shall long to read your speeches. I expect you will speak, if occasion offer, the very first day. You want no courage; and think highly enough of yourself, and lowly enough of every body else, to speak on all occasions.

As to the methods of the House, you have spirit enough, I fear, to be too much above them: take care of that.—I don't so much fear your want of good manners. To men, you want no decency, if they don't provoke you: as to that, I wish you would only learn to be as patient of contradiction from others, as you would have other people be to you.

Altho' I would not have you to be a courtier; neither would I have you to be a malecontent. I remember (for I have it down) what my old friend Archibald Hutcheson said; and it was a very good saying—(to Mr. Secretary Craggs, I think, it was) —“I look upon an administration, as entitled to every vote I can with good conscience give it; for a House of Commons should not needlessly put drags upon the wheels of government: and, when I have not given it my vote, it was with regret: and, for my country's sake, I wished with all my heart, the measure had been such as I could have approved.”

And another saying he had, which was this; “Neither can an opposition, neither can a ministry, be always wrong. To be a plumb man, therefore, with either, is an infallible mark, that that man must mean more and worse than he will own he does mean.”

Are these sayings bad, Sir? Are they to be despised? — Well then, why should I be despised for remembering them, and quoting them, as I love to do? Let me tell you, if you loved my company more than you do, you would not be the worse for it. I may say so without any vanity; since it is other men's wisdom, and not my own, that I am so fond of.

But to add a word or two more, on this occasion; and I may never have such another; for you must read this through—Love honest men, and herd with them, in the house and out of the house; by whatever names they be dignified or distinguished: keep good men company, and you shall be of the number. But did I, or did I not, write this before? Writing at so many different times, and such a quantity, one may forget.

You may come in for the title when I am dead and gone — God help me! — So I would have you keep an equilibrium. If once you get the name of being a fine speaker, you may have any thing: and, to be sure, you have naturally a great deal of elocution, a tongue that would delude an angel, as the women say—To their sorrow, some of them, poor creatures! — A leading man in the House of Commons is a very important character; because that House has the giving of money: and money makes the mare to go; ay, and queens and kings too, sometimes, to go in a manner very different from what they might otherwise chuse to go, let me tell you.

However, methinks, I would not have you take

a place neither — It will double your value, and your interest, if it be believed, that you will not: for, as you will then stand in no man's way; you will have no envy, but pure sterling respect; and both sides will court you.

For your part, you will not want a place, as some others do, to piece up their broken fortunes. If you can now live reputably upon two thousand pounds a year, it will be hard if you cannot hereafter live upon seven or eight — Less you will not have, if you oblige me; as now by marrying so fine a Lady, very much you will — And all this, over and above Lady Betty's and Lady Sarah's favors! — What, in the name of wonder, could possibly possess the proud Harlowes! — That son, that son of theirs! — But, for his dear sister's sake, I will say no more of him.

I never was offered a place myself: and the only one I would have taken, had I been offered it, was Master of the Buckhounds; for I loved hunting when I was young; and it carries a good sound with it for us who live in the country. Often have I thought of that excellent old adage; He that eats the king's goose, shall be choked with his feathers. I wish to the Lord, this was thoroughly considered by place-hunters! It would be better for them, and for their poor families.

I could say a great deal more, and all equally to the purpose. But really I am tired; and so I doubt are you. And besides, I would reserve something for conversation.

My nieces Montague, and Lady Sarah, and Lady Betty,

Betty, join in compliments to my niece that is to be. If she would chuse to have the knot tied among us, pray tell her that we shall see it securely done: and we will make all the country ring and blaze for a week together. But so I believe I said before.

If any thing further may be needful toward promoting your reciprocal felicity, let me know it; and how you order about the day; and all that. The inclosed bill is very much at your service. 'Tis payable at sight, as whatever else you may have occasion for, shall be.

So God bless you both; and make things as convenient to my gout as you can; though be it whenever it will, I will hobble to you; for I long to see you; and still more to see my niece; and am, in expectation of that happy opportunity,

Your most affectionate uncle,

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LETTER XLI.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

Thursday, *May 25.*

THOU seest, Belford, how we now drive before the wind. — The dear creature now comes almost at the first word, whenever I desire the honor of her company. I told her last night, that, apprehending delay from Pritchard's slowness, I was de-

terminated to leave it to my Lord to make his compliments in his own way; and had actually that afternoon put my writings into the hands of a very eminent lawyer, counsellor Williams, with directions for him to draw up settlements from my own estate, and conformable to those of my mother; which I put into his hands at the same time. It had been, I assured her, no small part of my concern, that her frequent displeasure, and our mutual misapprehensions, had hindered me from advising with her before on this subject. Indeed, indeed, my dearest life, said I, you have hitherto afforded me but a very thorny courtship.

She was silent. — kindly silent. For well know I, that she could have recriminated upon me with a vengeance. But I was willing to see, if she were not loth to disoblige me now. I comforted myself, I said, with the hopes, that all my difficulties were now over; and that every past disobligation would be buried in oblivion.

Now, Belford, I have actually deposited these writings with counsellor Williams; and I expect the draughts in a week at farthest. So shall be doubly armed. For if I attempt, and fail, these will be ready to throw in, to make her have patience with me till I can try again.

I have more contrivances still in embryo. I could tell thee of an hundred, and yet hold another hundred in petto, to pop in as I go along, to excite thy surprise, and to keep up thy attention. Nor rave thou at me; but, if thou art my friend, think of Miss Howe's letters, and of her smuggling scheme.

All owing to my fair captive's informations and incitements. Am I not a villain, a fool, a Beelzebub, with them already? — Yet no harm done by me, nor so much as attempted?

Every thing of this nature, the dear creature answered (with a downcast eye, and a blushing cheek) she left to me.

I proposed my Lord's chapel for the celebration, where we might have the presence of Lady Betty, Lady Sarah, and my two cousins Montague.

She seemed not to favor a public celebration; and waved this subject for the present. I doubted not but she would be as willing as I, to decline a public wedding; so I pressed not this matter farther just then.

But patterns I actually produced; and a jeweller was to bring as this day several sets of jewels for her choice. But the patterns she would not open. She sighed at the mention of them; the second patterns, she said, that had been offered to her: and very peremptorily forbid the jeweller's coming: as well as declined my offer of causing my mother's to be new set; at least for the present.

I do assure thee, Belford, I was in earnest in all this. My whole estate is nothing to me, put in competition with her hoped-for favor.

She then told me, that she had put into writing her opinion of my general proposals; and there had expressed her mind, as to clothes and jewels: but on my strange behaviour to her (for no cause that she knew of) on Sunday night, she had torn the paper in two.

I earnestly pressed her to let me be favored with a sight of this paper, torn as it was. And after some hesitation, she withdrew, and sent it to me by Dorcas.

I perused it again. It was in a manner new to me, though I had read it so lately: and, by my soul, I could hardly stand it. An hundred admirable creatures I called her to myself. But I charge thee, write not a word to me in her favor, if thou meanest her well; for if I spare her, it must be all *ex mero motu*.

You may easily suppose, when I was re-admitted to her presence, that I ran over in her praises, and in vows of gratitude, and everlasting love. But here's the devil; she still receives all I say with reserve; or if it be not with reserve, she receives it so much as her due, that she is not at all raised by it. Some women are undone by praise, by flattery. I myself, a man, am proud of praise. Perhaps thou wilt say, that those are most proud of it, who least deserve it; as those are of riches and grandeur, who are not born to either. I own, that to be superior to these foibles, it requires a soul. Have I not then a soul? — Surely, I have. — Let me then be considered as an exception to the rule.

Now have I foundation to go upon in my terms. My Lord, in the exuberance of his generosity, mentions a thousand pounds a year penny-rents. This I know, that were I to marry this Lady, he would rather settle upon her all he has a mind to settle, than upon me. He has even threatened, that if I prove not a good husband to her, he will leave all

he can at his death from me to her. Yet considers not that a woman so perfect can never be displeased with her husband but to his disgrace; for who will blame her? — Another reason, why a Lovelace should not wish to marry a Clarissa.

But what a pretty fellow of an uncle is this foolish Peer, to think of making a wife independent of her emperor, and a rebel of course; yet smarted himself for an error of this kind!

My beloved, in her torn paper, mentions but two hundred pounds a year, for her separate use. I insisted upon her naming a larger sum. She said, it might then be three; and I, for fear she should suspect very large offers, named only five; but added the entire disposal of all arrears in her father's hands, for the benefit of Mrs. Norton or whom she pleased.

She said, that the good woman would be uneasy if any thing more than a competency were done for her. She was for suiting all her dispositions of this kind, she said, to the usual way of life of the person. To go beyond it, was but to put the benefited upon projects, or to make them awkward in a new state; when they might shine in that to which they were accustomed. And to put it into so good a mother's power to give her son a beginning in his business at a proper time; yet to leave her something for herself, to set her above want, or above the necessity of taking back from her child what she had been enabled to bestow upon him; would be the height of such a worthy parent's ambition.

Here's prudence! Here's judgment in so young a creature! How do I hate the Harlowes for producing such an angel! — O why, why, did she refuse my sincere address to tie the knot before we came to this house!

But yet, what mortifies my pride, is, that this exalted creature, if I were to marry her, would not be governed in her behaviour to me by love, but by generosity merely, or by blind duty; and had rather live single, than be mine.

I cannot bear this. I would have the woman whom I honor with my name, if ever I confer this honor upon any, forego even her superior duties for me. I would have her look after me when I go out, as far as she can see me, as my Rosebud after her Johnny; and meet me at my return with rapture. I would be the subject of her dreams, as well as of her waking thoughts. I would have her think every moment lost, that is not passed with me: sing to me, read to me, play to me when I pleased; no joy so great as in obeying me. When I should be inclined to love, overwhelm me with it; when to be serious or solitary, if apprehensive of intrusion, retiring at a nod; approaching me only if I smiled encouragement: steal into my presence with silence; out of it, if not noticed, on tiptoe. Be a Lady easy to all my pleasures, and valuing those most who most contributed to them; only sighing in private, that it was not herself at the time. Thus of old did the contending wives of the honest patriarchs; each recommending her handmaid to her Lord, as

she thought it would oblige him, and looking upon the genial products as her own.

The gentle Waller says, Women are born to be control'd. Gentle as he was, he knew that. A tyrant-husband makes a dutiful wife. And why do the sex love rakes, but because they know how to direct their uncertain wills, and manage them?

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Another agreeable conversation. The day of days the subject. As to fixing a particular one, that need not be done, my charmer says, till the settlements are completed. As to marrying at my Lord's chapel, the Ladies of my family present, that would be making a public affair of it; and the dear creature observed with regret, that it seemed to be my Lord's intention to make it so.

It could not be imagined, I said, but that his Lordship's setting out in a litter, and coming to town, as well as his taste for glare, and the joy he would take to see me married at last, and to her dear self, would give it as much the air of a public marriage, as if the ceremony were performed at his own chapel, all the Ladies present.

I cannot, said she, endure the thoughts of a public day. It will carry with it an air of insult upon my whole family. And, for my part, if my Lord will not take it amiss (and perhaps he will not, as the motion came not from himself, but from you, Mr. Lovelace) I will very willingly dispense with his Lordship's presence; the rather, as dress and appearance will then be unnecessary; for I cannot bear

to think of decking my person while my parents are in tears.

How excellent this! Yet do not her parents richly deserve to be in tears?

See, Belford, with so charming a niceness, we might have been a long time ago upon the verge of the state, and yet found a great deal to do, before we entered into it.

All obedience, all resignation—No will but hers. I withdrew, and wrote directly to my Lord; and she not disapproving of it, I sent it away. The purport as follows; for I took no copy.

“ That I was much obliged to his Lordship for his intended goodness to me, on an occasion the most solemn of my life. That the admirable Lady, whom he so justly praised, thought his Lordship’s proposals in her favor too high. That she chose not to make a public appearance, if, without disobliging my friends, she could avoid it, till a reconciliation with her own could be effected. That altho’ she expressed a grateful sense of his Lordship’s consent to give her to me with his own hand; yet presuming, that the motive to this kind intention was rather to do her honor, than it otherwise would have been his own choice (especially as travelling would be at this time so inconvenient to him) she thought it advisable to save his Lordship trouble on this occasion; and hoped he would take as meant her declining the favor.

“ That the Lawn will be most acceptable to us both to retire to; and the rather, as it is so to his Lordship.

“ But, if he pleases, the jointure may be made from my own estate: leaving to his Lordship’s goodness the alternative.”

I conclude with telling him, “ That I had offered to present the Lady his Lordship’s bill; but on her declining to accept of it (having myself no present occasion for it) I return it inclosed, with my thanks, &c.”

And is not this going a plaguy length? What a figure should I make in rakish annals, if at last I should be caught in my own gin?

The sex may say what they will, but a poor innocent fellow had need to take great care of himself, when he dances upon the edge of the matrimonial precipice. Many a faint-hearted man, when he began in jest, or only designed to ape gallantry, has been forced into earnest, by being over-prompt, and taken at his word, not knowing how to own that he meant less than the Lady supposed he meant. I am the better enabled to judge that this must have been the case of many a sneaking varlet; because I, who know the female world as well as any man in it of my standing, am so frequently in doubt of myself, and know not what to make of the matter.

Then these little sly rogues, how they lie couchant, ready to spring upon us harmless fellows the moment we are in their reach!—When the ice is once broken for them, how swiftly can they make to port!—Meantime, the subject they can least speak to, they most think of. Nor can you talk of the ceremony before they have laid out in their minds how it is all

to be.—Little faucy face designers! how first they draw themselves in, then us!

But be all these things as they will, Lord M. . never in his life received so handsome a letter as this from his nephew

LOVELACE.

The Lady, after having given to Miss Howe the particulars contained in Mr. Lovelace's last letter, thus expresses herself:

A principal consolation arising from these favorable appearances, is, that I, who have now but one only friend, shall most probably, and if it be not my own fault, have as many new ones as there are persons in Mr. Lovelace's family; and this whether Mr. Lovelace treat me kindly or not. And who knows, but that by degrees, those new friends, by their rank and merit, may have weight enough to get me restored to the favor of my relations? Till which can be effected, I shall not be tolerably easy. Happy I never expect to be. Mr. Lovelace's mind and mine are vastly different; different in essentials.

But as matters are at present circumstanced, I pray you, my dear friend, to keep to yourself every thing that might bring discredit to him, if revealed.—Better any body expose a man than a wife, if I am to be his; and what is said by you will be thought to come from me.

It shall be my constant prayer, that all the felicities which this world can afford, may be yours: and that the Almighty will never suffer you nor yours, to the remotest posterity, to want such a friend as my Anna Howe has been to

Her

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER XLII.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

AND now, that my beloved seems secure in my net, for my project upon the vixen Miss Howe, and upon her mother: in which the officious prancer Hickman is to come in for a dash.

But why upon her mother, methinks thou askest, who, unknown to herself, has only acted, by thy impulse, through thy agent Joseph Leman, upon the folly of old Tony the uncle?

No matter for that: she believes she acts upon her own judgment, and deserves to be punished for pretending to judgment, when she has none.— Every living soul, but myself, I can tell thee, shall be punished, that treats either cruelly or disrespectfully so adored a Lady.— What a plague! is it not enough that she is teased and tormented in person by me?

I have already broken the matter to our three confederates; as a supposed, not a resolved-on case indeed. And yet they know, that with me, in a piece of mischief, execution, with its swiftest feet, is seldom three paces behind projection, which hardly ever limps neither.

Mowbray is not against it. It is a scheme, he says, worthy of us: and we have not done any thing for a good while, that has made a noise.

Belton, indeed, hesitates a little, because matters go wrong between him and his Thomazine; and the poor fellow has not the courage to have his fore place probed to the bottom.

Tourville has started a fresh game, and shrugs his shoulders, and should not chuse to go abroad at present, if I please. For I apprehend that (from the nature of the project) there will be a kind of necessity to travel, till all is blown over.

To me one country is as good as another; and I shall soon, I suppose, chuse to quit this paltry Island; except the mistress of my fate will consent to cohabit at home; and so lay me under no necessity of surprising her into foreign parts. Travelling, thou knowest, gives the sexes charming opportunities of being familiar with one another. A very few days and nights must now decide all matters betwixt me and my fair inimitable.

Doleman, who can act in these causes only as chamber-counsel, will inform us by pen and ink (his right hand and right side having not yet been struck, and the other side beginning to be sensible) of all that shall occur in our absence.

As for thee, we had rather have thy company than not; for altho' thou art a wretched fellow at contrivance, yet art thou intrepid at execution. But as thy present engagements make thy attendance uncertain, I am not for making thy part necessary to our scheme: but for leaving thee to come after us when abroad. I know thou canst not long live without us.

The project, in short, is this:—Mrs. Howe has an elder sister in the Isle of Wight, who is lately a widow; and I am well informed, that the mother and daughter have engaged, before the latter is married, to pay a visit to this Lady, who is rich, and intends Miss for her heiress; and in the interim will make her some valuable presents on her approaching nuptials; which, as Mrs. Howe, who loves money more than any thing but herself, told one of my acquaintance, would be worth fetching.

Now, Jack, nothing more need be done, than to hire a little trim vessel, which shall sail a pleasuring backward and forward to Portsmouth, Spithead and the Isle of Wight, for a week or fortnight before we enter upon our parts of the plot. And as Mrs. Howe will be for making the best bargain she can for her passage, the master of the vessel may have orders (as a perquisite allowed him by his owners) to take what she will give: and the master's name, be it what it will, shall be Ganmore on the occasion; for I know a rogue of that name, who is not obliged to be of any country, any more than we.

Well, then, we will imagine them on board. I will be there in disguise. They know not any of ye four—supposing (the scheme so inviting) that thou canst be one.

'Tis plaguy hard if we cannot find, or make, a storm.

Perhaps they will be sea-sick: but whether they be or not, no doubt they will keep their cabin.

Here will be Mrs. Howe, Miss Howe, Mr. Hickman, a maid, and a footman, I suppose; and thus we will order it:

I know it will be hard weather: I know it will: and before there can be the least suspicion of the matter, we shall be in sight of Guernsey, Jersey, Dieppe, Cherbourg, or any whither on the French coast that it shall please us to agree with the winds to blow us: and then, securing the footman, and the women being separated, one of us, according to lots that may be cast, shall overcome, either by persuasion or force, the maid servant: that will be no hard task; and she is a likely wench (I have seen her often): one, Mrs. Howe; nor can there be much difficulty there; for she is full of health and life, and has been long a widow: another (that, says the princely lion, must be I!) the faucy daughter; who will be too much frightened to make great resistance (violent spirits, in that sex, are seldom true spirits—'tis but where they can—) and after beating about the coast for three or four days for recreation's sake, and to make sure work, and till we see our fullen birds begin to eat and sip, we will set them all ashore where it will be most

convenient; sell the vessel (to Mrs. Townsend's agents, with all my heart, or to some other smugglers) or give it to Ganmore, and pursue our travels, and tarry abroad till all is hushed up.

Now I know thou wilt make difficulties, as it is thy way; while it is mine to conquer them. My other vassals made theirs; and I condescended to obviate them: as thus I will thine, first stating them for thee according to what I know of thy phlegm.

What, in the first place, wilt thou ask, shall be done with Hickman? who will be in full parade of dress and primness, in order to show the old aunt what a devilish clever fellow of a nephew she is to have.

What! — I will tell thee — Hickman, in good manners, will leave the women in their cabin — and, to show his courage with his breeding, be upon deck —

Well, and suppose he is?

Suppose he is! — Why then I hope it is easy for Ganmore, or any body else, myself suppose in my pea-jacket and great watch-coat (if any other make a scruple to do it) while he stands in the way, gaping and staring like a novice, to stumble against him, and push him overboard! — A rich thought! — Is it not, Belford? — He is certainly plaguy officious in the Ladies correspondence; and, I am informed, plays double between mother and daughter, in fear of both. — Dost not see him, Jack? — I do — popping up and down, his wig and hat floating by him; and paddling, pawing, and dashing,

like a frightened mongrel —— I am afraid he never ventured to learn to swim.

But thou wilt not drown the poor fellow; wilt thou?

No, no! — That is not necessary to the project — I hate to do mischiefs supererogatory. The skiff shall be ready to save him, while the vessel keeps its course: he shall be set on shore with the loss of wig and hat only, and of half of his little wits, at the place where he embarked, or any where else.

Well, but shall we not be in danger of being hanged for three such enormous rapes, although Hickman should escape with only a bellyful of seawater?

Yes, to be sure, when caught — But is there any likelihood of that? — Besides, have we not been in danger before now, for worse facts? — And what is there in being only in danger? — If we actually were to appear in open day in England before matters are made up, there will be greater likelihood, that these women will not prosecute, than that they will. — For my own part, I should wish they may. Would not a brave fellow chuse to appear in court to such an arraignment, confronting women who would do credit to his attempt? The country is more merciful in these cases, than in any others: I should, therefore, like to put myself upon my country.

Let me indulge a few reflections upon what thou mayest think the worst that can happen. I will suppose that thou art one of us; and that all five are
actually

actually brought to trial on this occasion: how bravely shall we enter a court, I at the head of you, dressed out each man, as if to his wedding appearance! — You are sure of all the women, old and young, of your side. — What brave fellows! — What fine gentlemen! — There goes a charming handsome man! — meaning me, to be sure! — Who could find in their hearts to hang such a gentleman as that! whispers one Lady, sitting, perhaps, on the right hand of the recorder (I suppose the scene to be in London): while another disbelieves that any woman could fairly swear against me. All will crowd after me: it will be each man's happiness (if ye shall chance to be bashful) to be neglected: I shall be found to be the greatest criminal; and my safety, for which the general voice will be engaged, will be yours.

But then comes the triumph of triumphs, that will make the accused look up, while the accusers are covered with confusion.

Make room there! — Stand by! — Give back! — One receiving a rap, another an elbow, half a score a push apiece! —

Enter the slow moving, hooded-faced, down-looking plaintiffs. —

And first the widow, with a sorrowful countenance, though half veil'd, pitying her daughter more than herself. The people, the women especially, who on this occasion will be five-sixths of the spectators, reproaching her — You'd have the conscience, would you, to have five such brave

gentlemen as these hanged for you know not what?

Next comes the poor maid—who perhaps had been ravished twenty times before; and had not appeared now, but for company sake; mincing, simpering, weeping, by turns; not knowing whether she should be sorry or glad.

But every eye dwells upon Miss—See, see, the handsome gentleman bows to her!

To the very ground, to be sure, I shall bow; and kiss my hand.

See her confusion! See! She turns from him!—Ay! that's because it is in open court, cries an arch one!—While others admire her—Ay! that's a girl worth venturing one's neck for!

Then we shall be praised—Even the judges, and the whole crowded bench, will acquit us in their hearts; and every single man wish he had been me!—The women, all the time, disclaiming prosecution, were the case to be their own. To be sure, Belford, the sufferers cannot put half so good a face upon the matter as we.

Then what a noise will this matter make!—Is it not enough, suppose us moving from the prison to the sessions-house*, to make a noble heart thump it away most gloriously, when such a one finds himself attended to his trial by a parade of guards

* Within these few years past, a passage has been made from the prison to the sessions house, whereby malefactors are carried into court without going through the street. Lovelace's triumph on their supposed march shows the wisdom of this alteration.

and officers, of miens and aspects warlike and unwarlike; himself their whole care, and their business! — Weapons in their hands, some bright, some rusty, equally venerable for their antiquity and inoffensiveness! Others, of more authoritative demeanour, strutting before with fine painted staves! Shoals of people following, with a Which is he whom the young Lady appears against? — Then, let us look down, look up, look round, which way we will, we shall see all the doors, the shops, the windows, the sign-irons and balconies (garrets, gutters, and chimney-tops included) all white-capt, black-hooded, and periwigg'd, or crop-ear'd up by the immobile Vulgus: while the floating street-swarmers, who have seen us pass by at one place, run with stretched-out necks, and strained eye-balls, a round about way, and elbow and shoulder themselves into places by which we have not passed, in order to obtain another sight of us; every street continuing to pour out its swarms of late comers, to add to the gathering snowball; who are content to take descriptions of our persons, behaviour, and countenances, from those who had the good fortune to have been in time to see us.

Let me tell thee, Jack, I see not why (to judge according to our principles and practices) we should not be as much elated in our march, were this to happen to us, as others may be upon any other the most mob-attracting occasion — Suppose a Lord-mayor on his gawdy; suppose a victorious general, or ambassador, on his public entry — Suppose — (as I began with the lowest) the grandest

parade that can be supposed, a coronation — For, in all these, do not the royal guard, the heroic trained bands, the pendent, clinging throngs of spectators, with their waving heads rolling to and fro from house-tops to house-bottoms and street-ways, as I have above described, make the principal part of the raree show?

And let me ask thee, if thou dost not think, that either the mayor, the embassador, or the general, would not make very pitiful figures on their gala's, did not the trumpets and tabrets call together the canaille to gaze at them? — Nor, perhaps, should we be the most guilty heroes neither: for who know; how the magistrate may have obtained his gold-chain? While the general probably returns from cutting of throats, and from murders, sanctified by custom only. — Cæsar, we are told *, had won, at the age of fifty-six, when he was assassinated, fifty pitched battles, had taken by assault above a thousand towns, and slain near, 1,200,000 men; I suppose exclusive of those who fell on his own side in slaying them. Are not you and I, Jack, innocent men, and babes in swadling-cloths, compared to Cæsar, and to his predecessor in heroism Alexander, dubbed for murders and depredation Magnus?

The principal difference that strikes me in the comparison between us and the mayor, the embassador, the general, on their gawdies, is, that

* Pliny gives this account, putting the number of men slain at 1,100,092. See also Lipsius de Constantia.

the mob make a greater noise, a louder huzzaing, in the one case than in the other, which is called acclamation, and ends frequently in higher taste, by throwing dead animals at one another, before they disperse; in which they have as much joy, as in the former part of the triumph: while they will attend us with all the marks of an awful or silent (at most only a whispering) respect; their mouths distended, as if set open with gags, and their voices generally lost in goggle-eyed admiration.

Well, but suppose, after all, we are convicted; what have we to do, but in time make over our estates, that the sheriffs may not revel in our spoils? — There is no fear of being hanged for such a crime as this, while we have money or friends. — And suppose even the worst, that two or three were to die, have we not a chance, each man of us, to escape? The devil's in them, if they'll hang five for ravishing three!

I know I shall get off for one — were it but for family sake: and being a handsome fellow, I shall have a dozen or two of young maidens, all dressed in white, go to court to beg my life — And what a pretty show they will make, with their white hoods, white gowns, white petticoats, white scarves, white gloves, kneeling for me, with their white handkerchiefs at their eyes, in two pretty rows, as Majesty walks through them, and nods my pardon for their sakes! — And, if once pardoned, all is over: for, Jack, in a crime of this nature there lies no appeal, as in a murder.

So thou seest the worst that can happen, should

we not make the grand tour upon this occasion, but stay and take our trials. But it is most likely, that they will not prosecute at all. If not, no risk on our side will be run; only taking our pleasure abroad, at the worst; leaving friends tired of us, in order, after a time, to return to the same friends endeared to us, as we to them, by absence.

This, Jack, is my scheme, at the first running. I know it is capable of improvement — for example: I can land these Ladies in France; whip over before they can get a passage back, or before Hickman can have recovered his fright; and so find means to entrap my beloved on board — And then all will be right; and I need not care if I were never to return to England.

Memorandum, to be considered of — Whether, in order to complete my vengeance, I cannot contrive to kidnap away either James Harlowe or Solmes, or both? A man, Jack, would not go into exile for nothing.

LETTER XLIII.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

IF, Belford, thou likest not my plot upon Miss Howe, I have three or four more as good in my own opinion; better, perhaps, they will be in thine: and so 'tis but getting loose from thy present engagement, and thou shalt pick and chuse. But as for thy three brethren, they must do as I would have them: and so, indeed, must thou — Else why am I your general? But I will refer this subject to its proper season. Thou knowest, that I never absolutely conclude upon a project, till 'tis time for execution; and then lightning strikes not quicker than I.

And now to the subject next my heart.

Wilt thou believe me, when I tell thee, that I have so many contrivances rising up and crowding upon me for preference, with regard to my Gloriana, that I hardly know which to chuse? — I could tell thee of no less than six princely ones, any of which must do. But as the dear creature has not grudged giving me trouble, I think I ought not, in gratitude, to spare combustibles for her; but, on the contrary, to make her stare and stand aghast, by springing three or four mines at once.

Thou rememberest what Shakespeare, in his Troilus and Cressida, makes Hector, who, however, is not used to boast, say to Achilles, in an interview

between them; and which, applied to this watchful Lady, and to the vexation she has given me, and to the certainty I now think I have of subduing her, will run thus; supposing the charmer before me; and I meditating her sweet person from head to foot:

Henceforth, O watchful fair-one, guard thee well:

For I'll not kill thee there! nor there! nor there!

But, by the zone that circles Venus' waist,

I'll kill thee ev'ry-where; yea, o'er and o'er.

Thou, wisest Belford, pardon me this brag:

Her watchfulness draws folly from my lips;

But I'll endeavour deeds to match the words,

Or may I never —

Then, I imagine thee interposing to qualify my impatience, as Ajax did to Achilles:

—— Do not chafe thee, cousin:

—— And let these threats alone,

Till accident or purpose bring thee to it.

All that vexes me, in the midst of my gloried in devices, is, that there is a forry fellow in the world, who has presumed to question, whether the prize, when obtained, is worthy of the pains it costs me: yet knows, with what patience and trouble a birdman will spread an acre of ground with gins and snares; set up his stalking-horse, his glasses; plant his decoy-birds, and invite the feathered throng by his whistle; and all his prize at last (the

reward of early hours, and of a whole morning's pains) only a simple linnet.

To be serious, Belford, I must acknowledge, that all our pursuits, from childhood to manhood, are only trifles of different sorts and sizes, proportioned to our years and views: but then is not a fine woman the noblest trifle, that ever was or could be obtained by man? — And to what purpose do we say obtained, if it be not in the way we wish for? — If a man is rather to be her prize, than she his?

* * *

And now, Belford, what dost think?

That thou art a cursed fellow, if —

If — No If's — But I shall be very sick to-morrow, I shall, 'faith.

Sick! — Why sick? — What a devil shouldst thou be sick for?

For more good reasons than one, Jack.

I should be glad to hear but one. — Sick, quotha! Of all thy roguish inventions I should not have thought of this.

Perhaps thou thinkest my view to be, to draw the Lady to my bedside: that's a trick of three or four thousand years old; and I should find it much more to my purpose, if I could get to hers. However, I'll condescend to make thee as wise as myself.

I am excessively disturbed about this smuggling scheme of Miss Howe. I have no doubt, that my fair one, were I to make an attempt, and miscarry,

will fly from me, if she can. I once believed she loved me: but now I doubt whether she does or not: at least, that it is with such an ardor, as Miss Howe calls it, as will make her overlook a premeditated fault, should I be guilty of one.

And what will being sick do for thee?

Have patience. I don't intend to be so very bad as Dorcas shall represent me to be. But yet I know I shall reach confoundedly, and bring up some clotted blood. To be sure, I shall break a vessel: there's no doubt of that: and a bottle of Eaton's Styptic shall be sent for; but no doctor. If she has humanity, she will be concerned. But if she has love, let it have been pushed ever so far back, it will, on this occasion, come forward, and show itself; not only in her eye, but in every line of her sweet face.

I will be very intrepid. I will not fear death, or any thing else. I will be sure of being well in an hour or two, having formerly found great benefit by this astringent medicine, on occasion of an inward bruise by a fall from my horse in hunting, of which, perhaps, this malady may be the remains. And this will show her, that though those about me may make the most of it, I do not; and so can have no design in it.

Well, methinks thou sayest, I begin to think tolerably of this device.

I knew thou wouldst, when I explained myself. Another time prepare to wonder; and banish doubt.

Now, Belford, I shall expect, that she will show some concern at the broken vessel, as it may be

attended with fatal effects, especially to one so fiery in his temper as I have the reputation to be thought to be: and the rather, as I shall calmly attribute the accident to the harasses and doubts under which I have labored for some time past. And this will be a further proof of my love, and will demand a grateful return —

And what then, thou egregious contriver?

Why then I shall have the less remorse, if I am to use a little violence: for can she deserve compassion, who shows none?

And what if she show a great deal of concern?

Then shall I be in hope of building on a good foundation. Love hides a multitude of faults, and diminishes those it cannot hide. Love, when acknowledged, authorises freedom; and freedom begets freedom; and I shall then see how far I can go.

Well but, Lovelace, how the deuce wilt thou, with that full health and vigor of constitution, and with that bloom in thy face, make any body believe thou art sick?

How! — Why, take a few grains of Ipecacuanha; enough to make me reach like a fury.

Good! — But how wilt thou manage to bring up blood, and not hurt thyself?

Foolish fellow! Are there not pigeons and chickens in every poulterer's shop?

Cry thy mercy.

But then I will be persuaded by Mrs. Sinclair, that I have of late confined myself too much; and so will have a chair called, and be carried to the park; where I will try to walk half the length of

the Mall, or so; and in my return, amuse myself at White's or the Cocoa.

And what will this do?

Questioning again! — I am afraid thou'rt an infidel, Belford — Why then shall I not know if my beloved offers to go out in my absence? — And shall I not see whether she receives me with tenderness at my return? But this is not all: I have a foreboding that something affecting will happen while I am out. But of this more in its place.

And now, Belford, wilt thou, or wilt thou not, allow, that it is a right thing to be sick? — Lord, Jack, so much delight do I take in my contrivances, that I shall be half-sorry, when the occasion for them is over; for never, never, shall I again have such charming exercise for my invention.

Mean time these plaguy women are so impertinent, so full of reproaches, that I know not how to do any thing but curse them. And then, truly, they are for helping me out with some of their trite and vulgar artifices. Sally particularly, who pretends to be a mighty contriver, has just now in an insolent manner told me, on my rejecting her proffered aids, that I had no mind to conquer; and that I was so wicked as to intend to marry, though I would not own it to her.

Because this little devil made her first sacrifice at my altar, she thinks she may take any liberty with me: and what makes her outrageous at times, is, that I have, for a long time, studiously as she says, slighted her too readily offered favors: but is it not very impudent in her to think, that I will be any

man's successor? It is not come to that neither. This, thou knowest, was always my rule — Once any other man's, and I know it, and never more mine. It is for such as thou, and thy brethren, to take up with harlots. I have been always aiming at the merit of a first discoverer.

The more devil I, perhaps thou wilt say, to endeavour to corrupt the uncorrupted.

But I say, not; since, hence, I have but very few adulteries to answer for.

One affair, indeed, at Paris, with a married Lady (I believe I never told thee of it) touched my conscience a little: yet brought on by the spirit of intrigue, more than by sheer wickedness. I'll give it thee in brief:

“A French Marquis, somewhat in years, employed by his court in a public function at that of Madrid, had put his charming young new-married wife under the control and wardship, as I may say, of his insolent sister, an old prude.

“I saw the Lady at the Opera. I liked her at first sight, and better at second, when I knew the situation she was in. So, pretending to make my addresses to the prude, got admittance to both.

“The first thing I had to do, was to compliment my prude into shyness by complaints of shyness: next, to take advantage of the Marquise's situation, between her husband's jealousy, and his sister's arrogance; and to inspire her with resentment; and, as I hoped, with a regard to my person. The French Ladies have no dislike to intrigue.

“The sister began to suspect me: the Lady had

no mind to part with the company of the only man who had been permitted to visit there; and told me of her sister's suspicions. I put her upon concealing the prude, as if unknown to me, in a closet in one of her own apartments, locking her in, and putting the key in her own pocket: and she was to question me on the sincerity of my professions to her sister, in her sister's hearing.

"She complied. My mistress was locked up. The Lady and I took our seats. I owned fervent love, and made high professions: for the Marquise put it home to me. The prude was delighted with what she heard.

"And how dost think it ended? — I took my advantage of the Lady herself, who durst not for her life cry out; and drew her after me to the next apartment, on pretence of going to seek her sister, who all the time was locked up in the closet."

No woman ever gave me a private meeting for nothing; my dearest Miss Harlowe excepted.

"My ingenuity obtained my pardon: the Lady being unable to forbear laughing through the whole affair, to find both so uncommonly tricked; her gaolers her prisoner, safe locked up, and as much pleased as either of us."

The English, Jack, do not often outwit the French.

"We had contrivances afterwards equally ingenious, in which the Lady, the ice once broken (once subdued, always subdued) co-operated — But a more tender tell-tale revealed the secret — Revealed it, before the Marquis could come to cover the disgrace. The sister was inveterate; the

husband irreconcilable; in every respect unfit for a husband, even for a French one — made, perhaps, more delicate to these particulars by the customs of a people among whom he was then resident, so contrary to those of his own countrymen. She was obliged to throw herself into my protection — Nor thought herself unhappy in it, till childbed-pangs seized her: then penitence, and death, overtook her the same hour!”

Excuse a tear, Belford! — She deserved a better fate! What has such a vile inexorable husband to answer for! — The sister was punished effectually — That pleases me on reflection — The sister was effectually punished! — But, perhaps, I have told thee this story before.

LETTER XLIV.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

Friday Evening.

JUST returned from an airing with my charmer, complied with after great importunity. She was attended by the two nymphs. They both topt their parts; kept their eyes within bounds; made moral reflections now and then. O Jack! what devils are women, when all tests are got over, and we have completely ruined them!

The coach carried us to Hamstead, to Highgate, to Muswell-hill; back to Hamstead to the Upper-

Flask : there, in compliment to the nymphs, my beloved consented to alight, and take a little repast. Then home early by Kentish town.

Delightfully easy she : and so respectful and obliging I, all the way, and as we walked out upon the heath, to view the variegated prospects which that agreeable elevation affords, that she promised to take now and then a little excursion with me. I think, Miss Howe, I think, said I to myself, every now and then as we walked, that thy wicked devices are superseded.

But let me give thee a few particulars of our conversation in the circumrotation we took, while in the coach — She had received a letter from Miss Howe yesterday, I presumed ?

She made no answer. How happy should I think myself to be admitted into their correspondence ! I would joyfully make an exchange of communications.

So, though I hoped not to succeed by her consent (and little did she think I had so happily in part succeeded without it) I thought it not amiss to urge for it, for several reasons : among others, that I might account to her for my constant employment at my pen ; in order to take off her jealousy, that she was the subject of thy correspondence and mine : and that I might justify my secrecy and uncommunicativeness by her own.

I proceeded therefore — That I loved familiar letter writing, as I had more than once told her, above all the species of writing : it was writing from the heart (without the fetters prescribed by method

method or study) as the very word cor-respondence implied. Not the heart only; the soul was in it. Nothing of body, when friend writes to friend; the mind impelling sovereignly the vassal-fingers. It was, in short, friendship recorded; friendship given under hand and seal; demonstrating that the parties were under no apprehensions of changing from time or accident, when they so liberally gave testimonies, which would always be ready, on failure, or infidelity; to be turned against them.—For my own part, it was the principal diversion I had in her absence: but for this innocent amusement, the distance she so frequently kept me at, would have been intolerable.

Sally knew my drift; and said, She had had the honor to see two or three of my letters, and of Mr. Belford's; and she thought them the most entertaining that she had ever read.

My friend Belford, I said, had a happy talent in the letter-writing way; and upon all subjects.

I expected my beloved would have been inquisitive after our subjects: but (lying perdue as I saw) not a word said she. So I touched upon this article myself.

Our topics were various and diffuse: sometimes upon literary articles (she was very attentive upon this); sometimes upon the public entertainments; sometimes amusing each other with the fruits of the different correspondencies we held with persons abroad, with whom we had contracted friendships; sometimes upon the foibles and perfections of our particular friends; sometimes upon our own present

and future hopes; sometimes aiming at humor and raillery upon each other. — It might, indeed, appear to favour of vanity, to suppose my letters would entertain a Lady of her delicacy and judgment: but yet I could not but say, that, perhaps, she would be far from thinking so hardly of me as sometimes she had seemed to do, if she were to see the letters which generally passed between Mr. Belford and me. I hope, Jack, thou hast more manners, than to give me the lye, though but in thy heart.

She then spoke: after declining my compliment in such a manner, as only a person could do, who deserved it, she said, For her part, she had always thought me a man of sense (a man of sense, Jack! what a niggardly praise!) — And should, therefore, hope, that, when I wrote, it exceeded even my speech: for that it was impossible, be the letters written in as easy and familiar a style as they would, but that they must have that advantage from sitting down to write them which prompt speech could not always have. She should think it very strange, therefore, if my letters were barren of sentiment; and as strange, if I gave myself liberties upon premeditation, which could have no excuse at all, but from a thoughtlessness, which itself wanted excuse. — But if Mr. Belford's letters and mine were upon subjects so general, and some of them equally (she presumed) instructive and entertaining, she could not but say, that she should be glad to see any of them; and particularly those which Miss Martin had seen and praised.

This was put close.

I looked at her, to see if I could discover any tincture of jealousy in this hint; that Miss Martin had seen what I had not shown to her. But she did not look it: so I only said, I should be very proud to show her not only those, but all that passed between Mr. Belford and me; but I must remind her, that she knew the condition.

No, indeed! with a sweet lip pouted out, as saucy as pretty; implying a lovely scorn, that yet can only be lovely in youth so blooming, and beauty so divinely distinguished.

How I long to see such a motion again! Her mouth only can give it.

But I am mad with love—Yet eternal will be the distance, at the rate I go on: now fire, now ice, my soul is continually upon the hiss, as I may say. In vain, however, is the trial to quench—what, after all is unquenchable.

Pr'ythee, Belford, forgive my nonsense, and my Vulcan-like metaphors—Did I not tell thee, not that I am sick of love, but that I am mad with it? Why brought I such an angel into such a house? into such company?—And why do I not stop my ears to the Sirens, who, knowing my aversion to wedlock, are perpetually touching that string?

I was not willing to be answered so easily: I was sure, that what passed between two such young Ladies (friends so dear) might be seen by every body: I had more reason than any body to wish to see the letters that passed between her and Miss Howe; because I was sure they must be full of

admirable instruction, and one of the dear correspondents had deigned to wish my entire reformation.

She looked at me as if she would look me thro': I thought I felt eye-beam, after eye-beam, penetrate my shivering reins.—But she was silent. Nor needed her eyes the assistance of speech.

Nevertheless, a little recovering myself, I hoped that nothing unhappy had befallen either Miss Howe or her mother. The letter of yesterday sent by a particular hand; she opening it with great emotion—seeming to have expected it sooner—were the reasons for my apprehensions.

We were then at Muswell-hill: “A pretty country within the eye,” to Polly, was the remark, instead of replying to me.

But I was not so to be answered—I should expect some charming subjects and characters from two such pens: I hoped every thing went on well between Mr. Hickman and Miss Howe. Her mother's heart, I said, was set upon that match: Mr. Hickman was not without his merits: he was what they Ladies called a sober man: but I must needs say, that I thought Miss Howe deserved a husband of a very different cast!

This, I supposed, would have engaged her into a subject from which I could have wiredrawn something:—For Hickman is one of her favorites—Why, I can't divine, except for the sake of opposition of character to that of thy honest friend.

But she cut me short by a look of disapprobation, and another cool remark upon a distant view;

and, "How far off, Miss Horton, do you think that clump of trees may be?" pointing out of the coach—So I had done.

Here endeth all I have to write concerning our conversation on this our agreeable airing.

We have both been writing ever since we came home. I am to be favored with her company for an hour, before she retires to rest.

All that obsequious love can suggest, in order to engage her tenderest sentiments for me against to-morrow's sickness, will I aim at when we meet. But at parting will complain of a disorder in my stomach.

* * *

We have met. All was love and unexceptionable respect on my part. Ease and complaisance on hers. She was concerned for my disorder. So sudden!—Just as we parted! But it was nothing. I should be quite well by morning.

Faith, Jack, I think I am sick already. Is it possible for such a giddy fellow as me to persuade myself to be ill? I am a better mimic at this rate than I wish to be. But every nerve and fibre of me is always ready to contribute its aid, whether by health or by ailment, to carry a resolved on roguery into execution.

Dorcas has transcribed for me the whole letter of Miss Howe, dated Sunday, May 14. of which before I had only extracts. She found no other letter added to that parcel: but this, and that which I copied myself in character last Sunday while she was at

church, relating to the smuggling scheme, are enough for me.

* * *

Dorcas tells me, that her Lady has been removing her papers from the mahogany chest into a wainscot-box, which held her linen, and which she put into her dark closet. We have no key of that at present. No doubt but all her letters, previous to those I have come at, are in that box. Dorcas is uneasy upon it: yet hopes that her Lady does not suspect her; for she is sure that she laid in every thing as she found it.

L E T T E R X L V.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

Cocoa-tree, Saturday, *May 27.*

THIS Ipecacuanha is a most disagreeable medicine. That these cursed physical folks can find out nothing to do us good, but what would poison the devil! In the other world, were they only to take physic, it would be punishment enough of itself for a mis-spent life. A doctor at one elbow, and an apothecary at the other, and the poor soul laboring under their prescribed operations, he need no worse tormentors.

But now this was to take down my countenance. It has done it: for, with violent reachings, having taken enough to make me sick, and not enough

water to carry it off, I presently looked as if I had kept my bed a fortnight. Ill jesting, as I thought in the midst of the exercise, with edge tools, and worse with physical ones.

Two hours it held me. I had forbid Dorcas to let her Lady know any thing of the matter; out of tenderness to her; being willing, when she knew my prohibition, to let her see that I expected her to be concerned for me. —

Well, but Dorcas was nevertheless a woman, and she can whisper to her Lady the secret she is enjoined to keep.

Come hither, toad (sick as a devil at the instant) let me see what a mixture of grief and surprise may be beat up together in thy pudden face.

That won't do. That dropt jaw, and mouth distended into the long oval, is more upon the horrible, than the grievous.

Nor that pinking and winking with thy odious eyes, as my charmer once called them.

A little better that; yet not quite right: but keep your mouth closer. You have a muscle or two which you have no command of, between your cheek-bone and your lips, that should carry one corner of your mouth up towards your crow's foot, and that down to meet it.

There! Begone! Be in a plaguy hurry running up stairs and down, to fetch from the diningroom what you carry up on purpose to fetch, till motion extraordinary put you out of breath, and give you the sigh-natural.

What's the matter, Dorcas?

Nothing, Madam.

My beloved wonders she has not seen me this morning, no doubt; but is too shy to say she wonders. Repeated What's the matter, however, as Dorcas runs up and down stairs by her door, bring on, Oh! Madam, my master! my poor master!

What! How! When!—And all the monosyllables of surprise.

(Within parenthesis let me tell thee, that I have often thought, that the little words in the republic of letters, like the little folks in a nation, are the most significant. The trisyllables, and the rumblers of syllables more than three, are but the good for little magnates.)

I must not tell you, Madam—My master ordered me not to tell you — But he is in a worse way than he thinks for!—But he would not have you frightened.

High concern took possession of every sweet feature. She pitied me! — By my soul, she pitied me!

Where is he?

Too much in a hurry for good manners (another parenthesis, Jack! Good manners are so little natural, that we ought to be composed to observe them: politeness will not live in a storm) I cannot stay to answer questions, cries the wench—though desirous to answer (a third parenthesis—Like the people crying proclamations, running away from the customers they want to sell to). The hurry puts the Lady in a hurry to ask (a fourth, by way of embellishing the third!)

as the other does the people in a hurry to buy. And I have in my eye now a whole street raised, and running after a proclamation or express-cryer, as if the first was a thief, the other his pursuers.

At last, O Lord! let Mrs. Lovelace know!—There is danger, to be sure! whispered from one nymph to another; but at the door, and so loud, that my listening fair one might hear.

Out she darts—As how! as how, Dorcas!

O Madam—a vomiting of blood! A vessel broke, to be sure!

Down she hastens, finds every body as busy over my blood in the entry, as if it were that of the Neapolitan Saint.

In steps my charmer, with a face of sweet concern. How do you, Mr. Lovelace?

O my best love!—Very well!—Very well!—Nothing at all! Nothing of consequence!—I shall be well in an instant!—Straining again, for I was indeed plaguy sick, though no more blood came.

In short, Belford, I have gained my end. I see the dear soul loves me. I see she forgives me all that's past. I see I have credit for a new score.

Miss Howe, I defy thee, my dear—Mrs. Townsend!—Who the devil are you?—Troop away with your contrabands. No smuggling! Nor smuggler, but myself! Nor will the choicest of my fair one's favors be long prohibited goods to me!

* * *

Every one is now sure that she loves me. Tears were in her eyes more than once for me. She suffered me to take her hand, and kiss it as often as I

pleased. On Mrs. Sinclair's mentioning, that I too much confined myself, she pressed me to take an airing; but obligingly desired me to be careful of myself. Wished I would advise with a physician. God made physicians, she said.

I did not think that, Jack. God, indeed, made us all. But I fancy she meant physic instead of physicians; and then the phrase might mean what the vulgar phrase means;—God sends meat, the devil cooks.

I was well already, on taking the styptic from her dear hands.

On her requiring me to take the air, I asked, If I might have the honor of her company in a coach; and this, that I might observe if she had an intention of going out in my absence.

If she thought a chair were not a more proper vehicle for my case, she would with all her heart!

There's a precious!

I kissed her hand again! She was all goodness — Would to heaven I better deserved it, I said! — But all were golden days before us! — Her presence and generous concern had done every thing. I was well! Nothing ailed me. But since my beloved will have it so, I'll take a little airing! — Let a chair be called! — O my charmer! Were I to have owed this indisposition to my late harasses, and to the uneasiness I have had for disobliging you; all is infinitely compensated by your goodness — All the art of healing is in your smiles! — Your late displeasure was the only malady!

While Mrs. Sinclair, and Dorcas, and Polly, and

even poor silly Mabell (for Sally went out, as my angel came in) with uplifted hands and eyes, stood thanking heaven that I was better, in audible whispers: See the power of love, cried one! — What a charming husband, another! — Happy couple, all!

O how the dear creature's cheek mantled! — How her eyes sparkled! — How sweetly acceptable is praise to conscious merit, while it but reproaches when applied to the undeserving! — What a new, what a gay creation it makes at once in a diffident or dispirited heart!

And now, Belford, was it not worth while to be sick? And yet I must tell thee, that too many pleasanter expedients offer themselves, to make trial any more of this confounded Ipecacuanha.

LETTER XLVI.

Miss CLARISSA HARLOWE, To Miss HOWE.

Saturday, *May 27.*

MR. Lovelace, my dear, has been very ill. Suddenly taken. With a vomiting of blood in great quantities. Some vessel broken. He complained of a disorder in his stomach over night. I was the more affected with it, as I am afraid it was occasioned by the violent contentions between us. — But was I in fault?

How lately did I think I hated him! — But hatred

and anger, I see, are but temporary passions with me. One cannot, my dear, hate people in danger of death, or who are in distress or affliction. My heart, I find, is not proof against kindness, and acknowledgment of errors committed.

He took great care to have his illness concealed from me as long as it could. So tender in the violence of his disorder! — So desirous to make the best of it! — I wish he had not been ill in my sight. I was too much affected — Every body alarming me with his danger — The poor man, from such high health, so suddenly taken! — And so unprepared! —

He is gone out in a chair. I advised him to do so. I fear that my advice was wrong; since quiet in such a disorder must needs be best. We are apt to be so ready, in cases of emergency, to give our advice, without judgment, or waiting for it! — I proposed a physician, indeed; but he would not hear of one. I have great honor for the faculty; and the greater, as I have always observed, that those who treat the professors of the art of healing contemptuously, too generally treat higher institutions in the same manner.

I am really very uneasy. For I have, I doubt, exposed myself to him, and to the women below. They, indeed, will excuse me, as they think us married. But if he be not generous, I shall have cause to regret this surprise; which (as I had reason to think myself unaccountably treated by him) has taught me more than I knew of myself.

'Tis true, I have owned more than once, that I

could have liked Mr. Lovelace above all men. I remember the debates you and I used to have on this subject, when I was your happy guest. You used to say, and once you wrote, that men of his cast are the men that our sex do not naturally dislike: while I held, that such were not (however that might be) the men we ought to like. But what with my relations precipitating of me, on one hand, and what with his unhappy character, and embarrassing ways on the other, I had no more leisure than inclination to examine my own heart in this particular. And this reminds me of a passage in one of your former letters, which I will transcribe, though it was written in raillery. "May it not be, say you, that you have had such persons to deal with, as have not allowed you to attend to the throbs; or if you had them a little now and then, whether, having had two accounts to place them to, you have not by mistake put them to the wrong one?" A passage, which, altho' it came into my mind when Mr. Lovelace was least exceptionable, yet that I have denied any efficacy to, when he has teased and vexed me, and given me cause of suspicion. For, after all, my dear, Mr. Lovelace is not wise in all his ways. And should we not endeavour, as much as is possible (where we are not attached by natural ties) to like and dislike as reason bids us, and according to the merit or demerit of the object? If love, as it is called, is allowed to be an excuse for our most unreasonable follies, and to lay level all the fences that a careful education has surrounded us by, what is meant by the

doctrine of subduing our passions? — But, O my dearest friend, am I not guilty of a punishable fault, were I to love this man of errors? And has not my own heart deceived me, when I thought I did not? And what must be that love, that has not some degree of purity for its object? I am afraid of recollecting some passages in my cousin Morden's letter. — And yet why fly I from subjects that, duly considered, might tend to correct and purify my heart? I have carried, I doubt, my notions on this head too high, not for practice, but for my practice. Yet think me not guilty of prudery neither; for had I found out as much of myself before, or, rather, had he given me heart's-ease enough before to find it out, you should have had my confession sooner.

Nevertheless let me tell you (what I hope I may justly tell you) that if again he give me cause to resume distance and reserve, I hope my reason will gather strength enough from his imperfections, to enable me to keep my passions under. — What can we do more than govern ourselves by the temporary lights lent us?

You will not wonder that I am grave on this detection — Detection, must I call it? What can I call it? —

Dissatisfied with myself, I am afraid to look back upon what I have written: and yet know not how to have done writing. I never was in such an odd frame of mind. — I know not how to describe it. — Was you ever so? — Afraid of the censure of her you love — Yet not conscious that you deserve it?

Of this, however, I am convinced, that I should, indeed, deserve censure, if I kept any secret of my heart from you.

But I will not add another word, after I have assured you, that I will look still more narrowly into myself: and that I am

Your equally sincere and affectionate

CL. HARLOWE.

LETTER XLVII.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

Saturday Evening.

I HAD a charming airing. No return of my malady. My heart perfectly easy, how could my stomach be otherwise?

But when I came home, I found that my sweet soul had been alarmed by a new incident—The inquiry after us both, in a very suspicious manner, and that by description of our persons, and not by names, by a servant in a blue livery turn'd up and trimm'd with yellow.

Dorcas was called to him, as the upper servant; and she refusing to answer any of the fellow's questions, unless he told his business, and from whom he came, the fellow (as short as she) said, That if she would not answer him, perhaps she

might answer somebody else; and went away out of humor.

Dorcas hurried up to her Lady, and alarmed her not only with the fact, but with her own conjectures; adding that he was an ill looking fellow, and she was sure could come for no good.

The livery and the features of the servant were particularly inquired after, and as particularly described—Lord bless her! no end of her alarms, she thought! And then did her apprehensions anticipate every evil that could happen.

She wished Mr. Lovelace would come in.

Mr. Lovelace came in soon after; all lively, grateful, full of hopes, of duty, of love, to thank his charmer, and to congratulate with her upon the cure she had performed. And then she told the story with all its circumstances; and Dorcas, to point her Lady's fears, told us, that the servant was a sun-burnt fellow, and looked as if he had been at sea.

He was then, no doubt, captain Singleton's servant, and the next news she should hear was, that the house was surrounded by a whole ship's crew; the vessel lying no further off, as she understood, than Rotherhithe.

Impossible, I said. Such an attempt would not be ushered in by such a manner of inquiry. And why may it not rather be a servant of your cousin Morden, with notice of his arrival, and of his design to attend you?

This surmise delighted her. Her apprehensions went off, and she was at leisure to congratulate me
upon

upon my sudden recovery ; which she did in the most obliging manner.

But we had not sat long together , when Dorcas again came fluttering up to tell us , that the footman, the very footman , was again at the door , and inquired , whether Mr. Lovelace and his Lady , by name , had not lodgings in this house ? He asked , he told Dorcas , for no harm : but his disavowing of harm , was a demonstration with my apprehensive fair one , that harm was intended. And as the fellow had not been answered by Dorcas , I proposed to go down to the street-parlour , and hear what he had to say.

I see your causeless terror , my dearest life , said I , and your impatience—Will you be pleased to walk down — And without being observed (for he shall come no farther than the parlour-door) you may hear all that passes ?

She consented. We went down. Dorcas bid the man come forward. Well , friend , what is your business with Mr. or Mrs. Lovelace ?

Bowing , scraping , I am sure you are the gentleman , Sir. Why , Sir , my business is only to know if your Honor be here , and to be spoken with ; or if you shall be here for any time ?

Whom came you from ?

From a gentleman who ordered me to say , if I was made to tell , but not else , it was from a friend of Mr. John Harlowe , Mrs. Lovelace's eldest uncle.

The dear creature was ready to sink upon this.

It was but of late that she had provided herself with salts. She pulled them out.

Do you know any thing of colonel Morden, friend? said I.

No; I never heard of his name.

Of captain Singleton?

No, Sir. But the gentleman, my master, is a captain too.

What is his name?

I don't know if I should tell.

There can be no harm in telling the gentleman's name, if you come upon a good account.

That I do, for my master told me so; and there is not an honefter gentleman on the face of God's yearth.—His name is captain Tomlinson, Sir.

I don't know such a one.

I believe not, Sir. He was pleased to say, He don't know your Honor, Sir; but I heard him say, as how he should not be an unwelcome visitor to you for all that.

Do you know such a man as captain Tomlinson, my dearest life (aside) your uncle's friend?

No; but my uncle may have acquaintance, no doubt, that I don't know.—But I hope (trembling) this is not a trick.

Well, friend, if your master has any thing to say to Mr. Lovelace, you may tell him, that Mr. Lovelace is here; and will see him whenever he pleases.

The dear creature looked as if afraid that my engagement was too prompt for my own safety; and away went the fellow—I wondering, that she might not wonder, that this captain Tomlinson, whoever

he were, came not himself, or sent not a letter the second time, when he had reason to suppose that I might be here.

Mean time, for fear that this should be a contrivance of James Harlowe, who, I said, loved plotting, though he had not a head turned for it, I gave some precautionary directions to the servants, and the women, whom, for the greater parade, I assembled before us: and my beloved was resolved not to stir abroad till she saw the issue of this odd affair.

And here must I close, though in so great a puzzle.

Only let me add, that poor Belton wants thee; for I dare not stir for my life.

Mowbray and Tourville skulk about like vagabonds, without heads, without hands, without souls; having neither you nor me to conduct them. They tell me they shall rust beyond the power of oil or action to brighten them up, or give them motion.

How goes it with thy uncle?

L E T T E R XLVIII.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

Sunday, *May 28.*

THIS story of captain Tomlinson employed us not only for the time we were together last night, but all the while we sat at breakfast this morning. She would still have it, that it was the prelude to some mischief from Singleton. I insisted (according to my former hint) that it might much more probably be a method taken by colonel Morden to alarm her, previous to a personal visit. Travelled gentlemen affected to surprise in this manner. And why, dearest creature, said I, must every thing that happens, which we cannot immediately account for, be what we least wish?

She had had so many disagreeable things befall her of late, that her fears were too often stronger than her hopes.

And this, Madam, makes me apprehensive, that you will get into so low-spirited a way, that you will not be able to enjoy the happiness that seems to await us.

Her duty and her gratitude, she gravely said, to the Dispenser of all good, would secure her, she hoped, against unthankfulness. And a thankful spirit was the same as a joyful one.

So, Belford, for all her future joys she depends entirely upon the invisible good. She is certainly

right; since those who fix least upon second causes are the least likely to be disappointed—And is not this gravity for her gravity?

She had hardly done speaking, when Dorcas came running up in a hurry—She set even my heart into a palpitation—Thump, thump, thump, like a precipitated pendulum in a clock-case—Flutter, flutter, flutter, my charmer's, as by her sweet bosom rising to her chin I saw.

This lower class of people, my beloved herself observed, were for ever aiming at the stupid wonderful, and for making even common incidents matter of surprise.

Why the devil, said I to the wench, this alarming hurry?—And with your spread fingers, and your O Madams, and O Sirs!—and be curs'd to you! Would there have been a second of time difference, had you come up slowly?

Captain Tomlinson, Sir!

Captain Devilson, what care I!—Do you see how you have disordered your Lady?

Good Mr. Lovelace, said my charmer trembling (see, Jack, when she has an end to serve, I am good Mr. Lovelace) If—if my brother,—if captain Singleton should appear—pray now—I beseech you—let me beg of you—to govern your temper—My brother is my brother—captain Singleton is but an agent.

My dearest life, folding my arms about her (when she asks favors, thought I, the devil's in it, if she will not allow of such innocent freedoms as this, from good Mr. Lovelace too) you shall be witness of

all that passes between us.—Dorcas, desire the gentleman to walk up.

Let me retire to my chamber first!—Let me not be known to be in the house!

Charming dear!—Thou seest, Belford, she is afraid of leaving me!—O the little witchcrafts! Were it not for surprises now and then, how would an honest man know where to have them?

She withdrew to listen.—And though this incident has not turned out to answer all I wished from it, yet is it necessary, if I would acquaint thee with my whole circulation, to be very particular in what passed between captain Tomlinson and me.

Enter captain Tomlinson in a riding-dress, whip in hand.

Your servant, Sir—Mr. Lovelace, I presume?
My name is Lovelace, Sir.

Excuse the day, Sir—Be pleased to excuse my garb. I am obliged to go out of town directly, that I may return at night.

The day is a good day. Your garb needs no apology.

When I sent my servant, I did not know that I should find time to do myself this honor. All that I thought I could do to oblige my friend this journey, was only to assure myself of your abode; and whether there were a probability of being admitted to the speech either of you, or your Lady.

Sir, you best know your own motives. What

your time will permit you to do, you also best know. And here I am, attending your pleasure.

My charmer owned afterwards her concern on my being so short. Whatever I shall mingle of her emotions, thou wilt easily guess I had afterwards.

Sir, I hope no offence. I intend none.

None — None at all, Sir.

Sir, I have no interest in the affair I come about. I may appear officious; and if I thought I should, I would decline any concern in it, after I have just hinted what it is.

And pray, Sir, what is it?

May I ask you, Sir, without offence, whether you wish to be reconciled, and to co-operate upon honorable terms, with one gentleman of the name of Harlowe; preparative as it may be hoped, to a general reconciliation?

O how my heart fluttered! cried my charmer.

I can't tell, Sir—(and then it fluttered still more, no doubt): the whole family have used me extremely ill. They have taken greater liberties with my character than are justifiable; and with my family too; which I can less forgive.

Sir, Sir, I have done. I beg pardon for this intrusion.

My beloved was then ready to sink, and thought very hardly of me.

But pray, Sir, to the immediate purpose of your present commission; since a commission it seems to be?

It is a commission, Sir; and such a one, as I

thought would be agreeable to all parties, or I should not have given myself concern about it.

Perhaps it may, Sir, when known. But let me ask you one previous question? Do you know colonel Morden, Sir?

No, Sir. If you mean personally, I do not. But I have heard my good friend Mr. John Harlowe talk of him with great respect; and as a co-trustee with him in a certain trust.

Lovel. I thought it probable, Sir, that the colonel might be arrived; that you might be a gentleman of his acquaintance; and that something of an agreeable surprize might be intended.

Capt. Had colonel Morden been in England, Mr. John Harlowe would have known it; and then I should not have been a stranger to it.

Lovel. Well but, Sir, have you then any commission to me from Mr. John Harlowe?

Capt. Sir, I will tell you, as briefly as I can, the whole of what I have to say; but you'll excuse me also a previous question, for which curiosity is not my motive; but it is necessary to be answered before I can proceed; as you will judge when you hear it.

Lovel. What, pray, Sir, is your question?

Capt. Briefly, Whether you are actually, and *bona fide*, married to Miss Clarissa Harlowe?

I started, and, in a haughty tone, Is this, Sir, a question that must be answered before you can proceed in the business you have undertaken?

I mean no offence, Mr. Lovelace. Mr. Harlowe

besought me to undertake this office. I have daughters and nieces of my own. I thought it a good office, or I, who have many considerable affairs upon my hands, had not accepted of it. I know the world; and will take the liberty to say, that if that young Lady —

Captain Tomlinson, I think you are called?

My name is Tomlinson.

Why then, captain Tomlinson, no liberty, as you call it, will be taken well, that is not extremely delicate, when that Lady is mentioned.

When you had heard me out, Mr. Lovelace, and had found, I had so behaved, as to make the caution necessary, it would have been just to have given it. — Allow me to say, I know what is due to the character of a woman of virtue, as well as any man alive.

Why, Sir! Why, captain Tomlinson, you seem warm. If you intend any thing by this (O how I trembled! said the Lady, when she took notice of this part of our conversation afterwards) I will only say, that this is a privileged place. It is at present my home, and an asylum for any gentleman who thinks it worth his while to inquire after me, be the manner or end of his inquiry what it will.

I know not, Sir, that I have given occasion for this. I make no scruple to attend you elsewhere, if I am troublesome here. I was told, I had a warm young gentleman to deal with: but as I knew my intention, and that my commission was

an amicable one, I was the less concerned about that. I am twice your age, Mr. Lovelace, I dare say: but I do assure you, that if either my message, or my manner, give you offence, I can suspend the one or the other for a day, or for ever, as you like. And so, Sir, any time before eight to morrow morning, you will let me know your further commands. — And was going to tell me where he might be found.

Captain Tomlinson, said I, you answer well. I love a man of spirit. Have you not been in the army?

I have, Sir; but have turned my sword into a ploughshare, as the Scripture has it (there was a clever fellow, Jack! — He was a good man with somebody, I warrant! O what a fine coat and cloak for a hypocrite will a text of Scripture, properly applied, make at any time in the eye of the pious! How easily are the good folks taken in!) — And all my delight, added he, for some years past, has been in cultivating my paternal estate. I love a brave man, Mr. Lovelace, as well as ever I did in my life. But let me tell you, Sir, that when you come to my time of life, you will be of opinion, that there is not so much true bravery in youthful choler, as you may now think there is.

A clever fellow again, Belford! — Ear and heart, both at once, he took in my charmer! — 'Tis well, she says, there are some men who have wisdom in their anger.

Well, captain, that is reproof for reproof. So

we are upon a foot. And now give me the pleasure of hearing the import of your commission.

Sir, you must first allow me to repeat my question: are you really, and *bona fide*, married to Miss Clarissa Harlowe? Or are you not yet married?

Bluntly put, captain. But if I answer that I am, what then?

Why then, Sir, I shall say, that you are a man of honor.

That I hope I am, whether you say it or not, captain Tomlinson.

Sir, I will be very frank in all I have to say on this subject — Mr. John Harlowe has lately found out, that you and his niece are both in the same lodgings; that you have been long so, and that the Lady was at the play with you yesterday was se'n-night; and he hopes, that you are actually married. He has indeed, heard, that you are; but as he knows your enterprising temper, and that you have declared, that you disdain a relation to their family, he is willing by me to have your marriage confirmed from your own mouth, before he take the steps he is inclined to take in his niece's favor. You will allow me to say, Mr. Lovelace, that he will not be satisfied with an answer that admits of the least doubt.

Let me tell you, captain Tomlinson, that it is a high degree of vileness for any man to suppose —

Sir — Mr. Lovelace — don't put yourself into a passion. The Lady's relations are jealous of the honor of their family. They have prejudices to

overcome as well as you — Advantage may have been taken — and the Lady, at the time, not to blame.

This Lady, Sir, could give no such advantages: and if she had, what must the man be, captain Tomlinson, who could have taken them? — Do you know the Lady, Sir?

I never had the honor to see her but once; and that was at church; and should not know her again.

Not know her again, Sir! — I thought there was not a man living who had once seen her, and would not know her among a thousand.

I remember, Sir, that I thought I never saw a finer woman in my life. But, Mr. Lovelace, I believe, you will allow, that it is better that her relations should have wronged you, than you the Lady. I hope, Sir, you will permit me to repeat my question.

Enter Dorcas, in a hurry.

A gentleman, this minute, Sir, desires to speak with your Honor — (My Lady, Sir! — Aside.)

Could the dear creature put Dorcas upon telling this fib, yet want to save me one? —

Desire the gentleman to walk into one of the parlours. I will wait on him presently.

(Exit Dorcas.)

The dear creature, I doubted not, wanted to instruct me how to answer the captain's home put. I

knew how I intended to answer it — Plumb, thou may'st be sure — But Dorcas's message staggered me. And yet I was upon one of my master-strokes — Which was, to take advantage of the captain's inquiries, and to make her own her marriage before him, as she had done to the people below; and if she had been brought to that, to induce her, for her uncle's satisfaction, to write him a letter of gratitude, which of course must have been signed Clarissa Lovelace. I was loth, therefore, thou may'st believe, to attend her sudden commands: and yet, afraid of pushing matters beyond recovery with her, I thought proper to lead him from the question, to account for himself, and for Mr. Harlowe's coming at the knowledge of where we are; and for other particulars which I knew would engage her attention; and which might possibly convince her of the necessity there was for her to acquiesce in the affirmative I was disposed to give. And this for her own sake; for what, as I asked her afterwards, is it to me, whether I am ever reconciled to her family? — A family, Jack, which I must for ever despise.

You think, captain, that I have answered doubtfully to the question you put. You may think so. And you must know, that I have a good deal of pride: and, only that you are a gentleman, and seem in this affair to be governed by generous motives, or I should ill brook being interrogated as to my honor to a Lady so dear to me. — But before I answer more directly to the point, pray satisfy me in a question or two that I shall put to you.

With all my heart, Sir. Ask me what questions you please, I will answer them with sincerity and candor.

You say, Mr. Harlowe has found out that we were at the play together: and that we were both in the same lodgings — How, pray, came he at his knowledge? — For, let me tell you, that I have for certain considerations (not respecting myself, I will assure you) condescended, that our abode should be kept secret. And this has been so strictly observed, that even Miss Howe, though she and my beloved correspond, knows not directly whither to send to us.

Why, Sir, the person who saw you at the play, was a tenant of Mr. John Harlowe. He watched all your motions. When the play was done, he followed your coach to your lodgings. And early the next day, Sunday, he took horse, and acquainted his landlord with what he had observed.

Lovel. How oddly things come about! — But does any other of the Harlowes know where we are?

Capt. It is an absolute secret to every other person of the family; and so it is intended to be kept: as also that Mr. John Harlowe is willing to enter into treaty with you, by me, if his niece be actually married; for perhaps he is aware, that he shall have difficulty enough with some people to bring about the desirable reconciliation, altho' he could give them this assurance.

I doubt it not, captain — To James Harlowe is all the family folly owing. — Fine fools! (heroically staking about) to be governed by one to whom

malice and not genius, gives the busy liveliness that distinguishes him from a natural! — But how long, pray, Sir, has Mr. John Harlowe been in this pacific disposition?

I will tell you, Mr. Lovelace, and the occasion; and be very explicit upon it, and upon all that concerns you to know of me, and of the commission I have undertaken to execute; and this the rather, as when you have heard me out, you will be satisfied, that I am not an officious man in this my present address to you.

I am all attention, captain Tomlinson.

And so I doubt not was my beloved.

Capt. You must know, Sir, that I have not been many months in Mr. John Harlowe's neighbourhood. I removed from Northamptonshire, partly for the sake of better managing one of two executorships, which I could not avoid engaging in (the affairs of which frequently call me to town, and are part of my present business); and partly for the sake of occupying a neglected farm, which has lately fallen into my hands. But though an acquaintance of no longer standing, and that commencing on the bowling-green, (uncle John is a great bowler, Belford) upon my decision of a point to every one's satisfaction, which was appealed to me by all the gentlemen; and which might have been attended with bad consequences, no two brothers have a more cordial esteem for each other. You know, Mr. Lovelace, that there is a consent, as I may call it, in some minds, which will unite them stronger

together in a few hours, than years can do with others, whom yet we see not with disgust.

Lovel. Very true, Captain.

Capt. It was on the foot of this avowed friendship on both sides, that on Monday the 15th, as I very well remember, Mr. Harlowe invited himself home with me. And when there, he acquainted me with the whole of the unhappy affair that had made them all so uneasy. Till then I knew it only by report; for, intimate as we were, I forbore to speak of what was so near his heart, till he began first. And then he told me, that he had had an application made to him, two or three days before, by a gentleman whom he named, to induce him not only to be reconciled himself to his niece, but to forward for her a general reconciliation.

A like application, he told me, had been made to his sister Harlowe, by a good woman whom every body respected; who had intimated, that his niece, if encouraged, would again put herself into the protection of her friends, and leave you: but if not, that she must unavoidably be yours.

I hope, Mr. Lovelace, I make no mischief.— You look concerned — You sigh, Sir.

Proceed, captain Tomlinson. Pray proceed. — And I sighed still more profoundly.

Capt. They all thought it extremely particular, that a Lady should decline marriage with a man she had so lately gone away with.

Pray, captain — Pray, Mr. Tomlinson — No more of this subject. — My beloved is an angel. In every thing

thing unblamable. Whatever faults there have been, have been theirs and mine. What you would further say, is, that the unforgiving family rejected her application. They did. She and I had had a misunderstanding. — The falling out of lovers — you know captain. We have been happier ever since.

Capt. “ Well, Sir; but Mr. John Harlowe could not but better consider the matter afterwards. And he desired my advice how to act in it. He told me, that no father ever loved a daughter as he loved this niece of his; whom, indeed, he used to call his daughter-niece. He said, she had really been unkindly treated by her brother and sister; and as your alliance, Sir, was far from being a discredit to their family, he would do his endeavour to reconcile all parties, if he could be sure that ye were actually man and wife.”

Lovel. And what, pray, captain, was your advice?

Capt. “ I gave it as my opinion, that if his niece were unworthily treated, and in distress (as he apprehended from the application to him) he would soon hear of her again: but that it was likely, that this application was made without expecting it would succeed; and as a salvo only, to herself, for marrying without their consent. And the rather thought I so, as he had told me, that it came from a young Lady her friend, and not in a direct way from herself; which young Lady was no favorite of the family; and, therefore, would hardly have been employed, had success been expected.”

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Lovel. Very well, captain Tomlinson — Pray proceed.

Capt. “Here the matter rested till last Sunday evening, when Mr. John Harlowe came to me with the man who had seen you and your Lady (as I presume she is) at the play; and who had assured him, that you both lodged in the same house.—And then the application having been so lately made, which implied, that you were not then married, he was so uneasy for his niece’s honor, that I advised him to dispatch to town some one in whom he could confide, to make proper inquiries.”

Lovel. Very well, captain — And was such a person employed on such an errand by her uncle?

Capt. “A trusty and discreet person was accordingly sent; and last Tuesday, I think it was (for he returned to us on the Wednesday) he made the inquiries among the neighbours first (the very inquiry, Jack, that gave us all so much uneasiness). But finding that none of them could give any satisfactory account, the Lady’s woman was come at, who declared, that you were actually married. But the inquirer keeping himself on the reserve as to his employers, the girl refused to tell the day, or to give him other particulars.”

Lovel. You give a very clear account of every thing, captain Tomlinson. Pray proceed.

Capt. “The gentleman returned; and on his report, Mr. Harlowe, having still doubts, and being willing to proceed on some grounds in so important a point, besought me (as my affairs called me frequently to town) to undertake this matter,

You, Mr. Tomlinson, he was pleased to say, have children of your own: you know the world: you know what I drive at: you will proceed, I am sure, with understanding and spirit: and whatever you are satisfied with, shall satisfy me."

Enter Dorcas, in a hurry.

Sir the gentleman is impatient.
I will attend him presently.

The captain then accounted for his not calling in person, when he had reason to think us here.

He said he had business of consequence a few miles out of town, whither he thought he must have gone yesterday; and having been obliged to put off his little journey to this day, and understanding that we were within, not knowing whether he should have such another opportunity, he was willing to try his good fortune before he set out; and this made him come booted and spurred, as I saw him.

He dropped a hint in commendation of the people of the house; but it was in such a way, as to give no room to suspect that he thought it necessary to inquire after the character of persons who made so genteel an appearance, as he observed they do.

And here let me remark, that my beloved might collect another circumstance in favor of the people below, had she doubted their characters, from the silence of her uncle's inquirist on Tuesday among the neighbours.

Capt. "And now, Sir, that I believe I have satisfied you in every thing relating to my commission,

I hope you will permit me to repeat my question—
which is —

Enter Dorcas again, out of breath.

Sir, the gentleman will step up to you—(My Lady is impatient. She wonders at your Honor's delay. Aside.)

Excuse me, captain, for one moment.

I have staid my full time, Mr. Lovelace. What may result from my question and your answer, whatever it shall be, may take us up time.—And you are engaged. Will you permit me, to attend you in the morning, before I set out on my return?

You will then breakfast with me, captain?

It must be early if I do. I must reach my own house to morrow night, or I shall make the best of wives unhappy. And I have two or three places to call at in my way.

It shall be by seven o'clock, if you please, captain. We are early folks. And this I will tell you, that if ever I am reconciled to a family so implacable as I have always found the Harlowes to be, it must be by the mediation of so cool and so moderate a gentleman as yourself.

And so, with the highest civilities on both sides, we parted. But for the private satisfaction of so good a man, I left him out of doubt, that we were man and wife, though I did not directly aver it.

LETTER XLIX.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

Sunday Night.

THIS captain Tomlinson is one of the happiest as well as one of the best men in the world. What would I give to stand as high in my beloved's opinion, as he does! But yet I am as good a man as he, were I to tell my own story, and have equal credit given it. But the devil should have had him before I had seen him on the account he came upon, had I thought I should not have answered my principal end in it. I hinted to thee in my last what that was.

But to the particulars of the conference between my fair one, and me, on her hasty messages; which I was loth to come to, because she has had a half triumph over me in it.

After I had attended the captain down to the very passage, I returned to the diningroom, and put on a joyful air, on my beloved's entrance into it — O my dearest creature, said I, let me congratulate you on a prospect so agreeable to your wishes! And I snatched her hand, and smothered it with kisses.

I was going on; when, interrupting me, You see, Mr. Lovelace, said she, how you have embarrassed yourself, by your obliquities! You see, that you have not been able to return a direct answer to a

plain and honest question, though upon it depends all the happiness on the prospect of which you congratulate me.

You know, my best love, what my prudent, and I will say, my kind motives were, for giving out, that we were married. You see that I have taken no advantage of it; and that no inconvenience has followed it. You see that your uncle wants only to be assured from ourselves, that it is so —

Not another word on this subject, Mr. Lovelace. I will not only risk, but I will forfeit, the reconciliation so near my heart, rather than I will go on to countenance a story so untrue!

My dearest soul — would you have me appear —

I would have you appear, Sir, as you are! I am resolved that I will appear to my uncle's friend, and to my uncle, as I am.

For one week, my dearest life! Cannot you for one week — only till the settlements —

Not for one hour, with my own consent. You don't know, Sir, how much I have been afflicted, that I have appeared to the people below what I am not. But my uncle, Sir, shall never have it to upbraid me, nor will I to upbraid myself, that I have wilfully passed upon him in false lights.

What, my dear, would you have me say to the captain to-morrow morning? I have given him room to think —

Then put him right, Mr. Lovelace. Tell the truth. Tell him what you please of the favor of your relations to me: tell him what you will about the settlements: and if when drawn, you will submit them to

his perusal and approbation, it will show him how much you are in earnest.

My dearest life — Do you think, that he would disapprove of the terms I have offered?

No.

Then may I be accursed, if I willingly submit to be trampled under foot by my enemies!

And may I, Mr. Lovelace, never be happy in this life, if I submit to the passing upon my uncle Harlowe a wilful and premeditated falsehood for truth! I have too long labored under the affliction which the rejection of all my friends has given me, to purchase my reconciliation with them now at so dear a price as at that of my veracity.

The women below, my dear —

What are the women below to me? I want not to establish myself with them. Need they know all that passes between my relations and you and me.

Neither are they any thing to me, Madam. Only, that when, for the sake of preventing the fatal mischiefs which might have attended your brother's projects, I have made them think us married, I would not appear to them in a light which you yourself think so shocking. By my soul, Madam, I had rather die, than contradict myself so flagrantly after I had related to them so many circumstances of our marriage.

Well, Sir, the women may believe what they please. That I have given countenance to what you told them, is my error. The many circumstances which you own one untruth has drawn you in to

relate, is a justification of my refusal in the present case.

Don't you see, Madam, that your uncle wishes to find that we are married? May not the ceremony be privately over, before his mediation can take place?

Urge this point no farther, Mr. Lovelace. If you will not tell the truth, I will to morrow morning, if I see captain Tomlinson, tell it myself. Indeed I will.

Will you, Madam, consent, that things pass as before with the people below? This mediation of Tomlinson may come to nothing. Your brother's schemes may be pursued; the rather, that now he will know (perhaps from your uncle) that you are not under a legal protection.—You will, at least, consent, that things pass here as before?

To permit this, is to go on in an error, Mr. Lovelace. But as the occasion for so doing (if there can be in your opinion an occasion that will warrant an untruth) will, as I presume, soon be over, I shall the less dispute the point with you. But a new error I will not be guilty of, if I can avoid it.

Can I, do you think, Madam, have any dishonorable view in the step I supposed you would not scruple to take towards a reconciliation with your own family? Not for my own sake, you know, did I wish you to take it; for what is it to me, if I am never reconciled to your family? I want no favors from them.

I hope, Mr. Lovelace, there is no occasion, in our present not disagreeable situation, to answer such

a question. And let me say, that I shall think my prospects still more agreeable, if, to morrow morning, you will not only own the very truth, but give my uncle's friend such an account of the steps you have taken, and are taking, as may keep up my uncle's favorable intentions towards me. This you may do under what restrictions of secrecy you please. Captain Tomlinson is a prudent man; a promoter of family-peace, you find; and, I dare say, may be made a friend.

I saw there was no help. I saw that the inflexible Harlowe spirit was all up in her.—A little witch!—A little—Forgive me, love, for calling her names! And so I said, with an air, We have had too many misunderstandings, Madam, for me to wish for new ones: I will obey you without reserve. Had I not thought I should have obliged you by the other method (especially as the ceremony might have been over, before any thing could have operated from your uncle's intentions, and of consequence no untruth persisted in) I would not have proposed it. But think not, my beloved creature, that you shall enjoy, without condition, this triumph over my judgment.

And then, clasping my arms about her, I gave her averted cheek (her charming lip designed) a fervent kiss.—And your forgiveness of this sweet freedom (bowing) is that condition.

She was not mortally offended. And now must I make out the rest as well as I can. But this I will tell thee, that altho' her triumph has not diminished my love for her, yet has it stimulated me more than

ever to revenge, as thou wilt be apt to call it. But victory or conquest is the more proper word.

There is a pleasure, 'tis true, in subduing one of these watchful beauties. But, by my soul, Belford, men of our cast take twenty times the pains to be rogues, that it would cost them to be honest; and dearly, with the sweat of our brows, and to the puzzling of our brains (to say nothing of the hazards we run) do we earn our purchase; and ought not, therefore, to be grudged our success when we meet with it—Especially as, when we have obtained our end, satiety soon follows; and leaves us little or nothing to show for it. But this, indeed, may be said of all worldly delights. — And is not that a grave reflection from me?

I was willing to write up to the time. Altho' I have not carried my principal point, I shall make something turn out in my favor from captain Tomlinson's errand. But let me give thee this caution; that thou do not pretend to judge of my devices by parts; but have patience till thou seest the whole. But once more I swear, that I will not be out-Norris'd by a pair of novices. And yet I am very apprehensive at times of the consequences of Miss Howe's smuggling scheme.

My conscience, I should think, ought not to reproach me for a contrivance, which is justified by the contrivances of two such girls as these: one of whom (the more excellent of the two) I have always, with her own approbation as I imagine, proposed for my imitation.

But here, Jack, is the thing that concludes me,

and cases my heart with adamant: I find by Miss Howe's letters, that it is owing to her, that I have made no greater progress with my blooming fair one. She loves me. The Ipecacuanha contrivance convinces me that she loves me. Where there is love, there must be confidence, or a desire of having reason to confide. Generosity, founded on my supposed generosity, has taken hold of her heart. Shall I not now see (since I must be for ever unhappy, if I marry her, and leave any trial untried) what I can make of her love, and her newly-raised confidence?—Will it not be to my glory if I succeed? And to hers, and to the honor of her sex, if I cannot?—Where then will be the hurt to either, to make the trial? And cannot I, as I have often said, reward her when I will by marriage?

'Tis late, or rather early; for the day begins to dawn upon me. I am plaguily heavy. Perhaps I need not to have told thee that. But will only indulge a doze in my chair, for an hour; then shake myself, wash and refresh. At my time of life, with such a constitution as I am blessed with, that's all that's wanted.

Good night to me!—It cannot be broad day till I am awake.—Aw-w-w-w-haugh—Pox of this yawning!

Is not thy uncle dead yet?

What's come to mine, that he writes not to my last?—Hunting after more wisdom of nations, I suppose!—Yaw - yaw - yawn-ing again!—Pen, begone.

L E T T E R L.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

Monday, *May* 29.

NOW have I established myself for ever in my charmer's heart.

The captain came at seven, as promised, and ready equipped for his journey. My beloved chose not to give us her company till our first conversation was over—Ashamed, I suppose, to be present at that part of it, which was to restore her to her virgin state by my confession, after her wifeness had been reported to her uncle. But she took her cue nevertheless, and listened to all that passed.

The modestest women, Jack, must think, and think deeply sometimes. I wonder whether they ever blush at those things by themselves, at which they have so charming a knack of blushing in company. If not; and if blushing be a sign of grace or modesty; have not the sex as great a command over their blushes, as they are said to have over their tears? This reflection would lead me a great way into female minds, were I disposed to pursue it.

I told the captain, that I would prevent his question; and accordingly (after I had enjoined the strictest secrecy, that no advantage might be given to James Harlowe; and which he answered for as well on Mr. Harlowe's part as his own) I acknowledged nakedly and fairly the whole truth—

To wit, "That we were not yet married. I gave him hints of the causes of procrastination. Some of them owing to unhappy misunderstandings: but chiefly to the Lady's desire of a previous reconciliation with her friends; and to a delicacy that had no example."

Less nice Ladies than this, Jack, love to have delays, wilful and studied delays, imputed to them in these cases — Yet are indelicate in their affected delicacy; for do they not thereby tacitly confess, that they expect to be the greatest gainers in wedlock; and that there is self-denial in the pride they take in delaying?

I told him the reason of our passing to the people below as married — Yet as under a vow of restriction, as to consummation, which had kept us both to the height, one of forbearing, the other of vigilant punctilio; even to the denial of those innocent freedoms, which betrothed lovers never scruple to allow and to take.

I then communicated to him the copy of my proposals of settlement; the substance of her written answer; the contents of my letter of invitation to Lord M. . . to be her nuptial-father; and of my Lord's generous reply. But said, that having apprehensions of delay from his infirmities, and my beloved chusing by all means (and that from principles of unrequitted duty) a private solemnization, I had written to excuse his Lordship's presence; and expected an answer every hour.

The settlements, I told him, were actually

drawing by counsellor Williams, of whose eminence he must have heard —

He had.

And of the truth of this he might satisfy himself before he went out of town.

When these were drawn, approved, and engrossed, nothing, I said, but signing, and the nomination of my happy day, would be wanting. I had a pride, I declared, in doing the highest justice, to so beloved a creature, of my own voluntary motion, and without the intervention of a family from whom I had received the greatest insults. And this being our present situation, I was contented that Mr. John Harlowe should suspend his reconciliatory purposes till our marriage were actually solemnized.

The captain was highly delighted with all I said: yet owned, that as his dear friend Mr. Harlowe had expressed himself greatly pleased to hear that we were actually married, he could have wished it had been so. But, nevertheless, he doubted not that all would be well.

He saw my reasons, he said, and approved of them, for making the gentlewomen below (whom again he understood to be good sort of people) believe, that the ceremony had passed; which so well accounted for what the Lady's maid had told Mr. Harlowe's friend. Mr. James Harlowe, he said, had certainly ends to answer in keeping open the breach; and as certainly had formed a design to get his sister out of my hands. Wherefore it as much imported his worthy friend to keep this treaty a secret, as it

did me; at least till he had formed his party, and taken his measures. Ill-will and passion were dreadful misrepresenters. It was amazing to him, that animosity could be carried so high against a man capable of views so pacific and so honorable, and who had shown such a command of his temper, in this whole transaction, as I had done. Generosity, indeed, in every case, where love of stratagem and intrigue (I would excuse him) were not concerned, was a part of my character —

He was proceeding, when breakfast being ready, in came the empress of my heart, irradiating all around her, as with a glory — A benignity and graciousness in her aspect, that though natural to it, had been long banished from it.

Next to prostration lowly bowed the captain. O how the sweet creature smiled her approbation of him! Reverence from one, begets reverence from another. Men are more of monkeys in imitation, than they think themselves — Involuntarily, in a manner, I bent my knee — My dearest life — and made a very fine speech on presenting the captain to her. No title, myself, to her lip or cheek, 'tis well he attempted not either. He was indeed ready to worship her; — could only touch her charming hand.

I have told the captain, my dear creature — And then I briefly repeated (as if I had supposed she had not heard it) all I had told him,

He was astonished, that any body could be displeased one moment with such an angel. He undertook her cause as the highest degree of merit to himself.

Never, I must needs say, did the angel so much look the angel. All placid, serene, smiling, self-assured: a more lovely flush than usual heightening her natural graces, and adding charms, even to radiance, to her charming complexion.

After we had seated ourselves, the agreeable subject was renewed, as we took our chocolate. How happy should she be in her uncle's restored favor!

The captain engaged for it—No more delays, he hoped, on her part! Let the happy day be but once over, all would then be right. But was it improper to ask for copies of my proposals, and of her answer, in order to show them to his dear friend her uncle?

As Mr. Lovelace pleased—O that the dear creature would always say so!

It must be in strict confidence then, I said. But would it not be better to show her uncle the draught of the settlements, when drawn?

And will you be so good, as to allow of this, Mr. Lovelace?

There, Belford! We were once the Quarrellsome, but now we are the Polite, Lovers.

Indeed, my dearest creature, I will, if you desire it; and if captain Tomlinson will engage, that Mr. Harlowe shall keep them absolutely a secret; that I may not be subjected to the cavil and control of any others of a family that had used me so very ill.

Now, indeed, Sir, you are very obliging.

Dost think, Jack, that my face did not now also shine?

I held

I held out my hand (first consecrating it with a kiss) for hers. She condescended to give it me. I pressed it to my lips: you know not, captain Tomlinson (with an air) all storms overblown, what a happy man —

Charming couple! (his hands lifted up) How will my good friend rejoice! O that he were present! You know not, Madam, how dear you still are to your uncle Harlowe! —

I am unhappy ever to have disoblige him!

Not too much of that, however, fairest, thought I!

The captain repeated his resolutions of service, and that in so acceptable a manner, that the dear creature wished, that neither he, nor any of his, might ever want a friend of equal benevolence.

Nor any of his, she said; for the captain brought it in, that he had five children living, by one of the best of wives and mothers, whose excellent management made him as happy, as if his eight hundred pounds a year (which was all he had to boast of) were two thousand.

Without œconomy, the oraculous Lady said, no estate was large enough: with it, the least was not too small.

Lie still, teasing villain! lie still! — I was only speaking to my conscience, Jack.

And let me ask you, Mr. Lovelace, said the captain; yet not so much from doubt, as that I may proceed upon sure grounds,—You are willing to co-operate with my dear friend in a general reconciliation?

Let me tell you, Mr. Tomlinson, that if it can be distinguished, that my readiness to make up with a family, of whose generosity I have not had reason to think highly, is entirely owing to the value I have for this angel of a woman, I will not only cooperate with Mr. John Harlowe, as you ask; but I will meet Mr. James Harlowe senior, and his Lady, all the way. And furthermore, to make the son James and his sister Arabella quite easy, I will absolutely disclaim any further interest, whether living or dying, in any of the three brother's estates; contenting myself with what my beloved's grandfather has bequeathed to her: for I have reason to be abundantly satisfied with my own circumstances and prospects — Enough rewarded, were she not to bring a shilling in dowry, in a woman who has a merit superior to all the goods of fortune. — True as the Gospel, Belford! — Why had not this scene a real foundation!

The dear creature, by her eyes, expressed her gratitude, before her lips could utter it. O Mr. Lovelace, said she — You have infinitely — And there she stopt.

The captain run over in my praise. He was really affected.

O that I had not such a mixture of revenge and pride in my love, thought I! — But (my old plea) cannot I make her amends at any time? And is not her virtue now in the height of its probation? — Would she lay aside, like the friends of my uncontenting Rosebud, all thoughts of defiance — Would she throw herself upon my mercy, and try me but

one fortnight in the life of honor — What then? — I cannot say, what then. —

Do not despise me, Jack, for my inconsistency. — In no two letters, perhaps, agreeing with myself — Who expects consistency in men of our character? — But I am mad with love — fired by revenge — puzzled with my own devices — my invention is my curse — my pride my punishment — Drawn five or six ways at once, can she possibly be so unhappy as I? — O why, why, was this woman so divinely excellent! — Yet how know I that she is? What have been her trials? Have I had the courage to make a single one upon her person, though a thousand upon her temper? — Enow, I hope, to make her afraid of ever disobliging me more! —

* * *

I must banish reflection, or I am a lost man. For these two hours past have I hated myself for my own contrivances. And this not only from what I have related to thee; but from what I have further to relate. But I have now once more steeled my heart. My vengeance is uppermost; for I have been re-perusing some of Miss Howe's virulence. The contempt they have both held me in, I cannot bear —

The happiest breakfast-time, my beloved owned, that she had ever known since she had left her father's house (she might have let this alone). The captain renewed all his protestations of service. He would write me word how his dear friend received the account he should give him of the happy situation of our affairs, and what he thought of the settlements, as soon as I should send him the draughts so kindly

promised. And we parted with great professions of mutual esteem; my beloved putting up vows for the success of his generous mediation.

When I returned from attending the captain down stairs, which I did to the outward door, my beloved met me as I entered the diningroom; complacency reigning in every lovely feature.

“ You see me already, said she, another creature. You know not, Mr. Lovelace, how near my heart this hoped for reconciliation is. I am now willing to banish every disagreeable remembrance. You know not, Sir, how much you have obliged me. And Oh, Mr. Lovelace, how happy shall I be, when my heart is lightened from the all-sinking weight of a father's curse! When my dear mamma (you don't know, Sir, half the excellencies of my dear mamma! and what a kind heart she has, when it is left to follow its own impulses —) When this blessed mamma shall once more fold me to her indulgent bosom! When I shall again have uncles and aunts, and a brother and sister, all striving who shall show most kindness and favor to the poor outcast, then no more an outcast! — And you, Mr. Lovelace, to behold all this, and to be received into a family so dear to me, with welcome. — What though a little cold at first? When they come to know you better, and to see you oftener, no fresh causes of disgust occurring, and you, as I hope, having entered upon a new course, all will be warmer and warmer love on both sides, till every one, perhaps, will wonder, how they came to set themselves against you. ”

Then drying her tears with her handkerchief, after a few moments pausing, on a sudden; as if recollecting that she had been led by her joy to an expression of it which she had not intended I should see, she retired to her chamber with precipitation leaving me almost as unable to stand it, as herself.

In short, I was — I want words to say how I was — My nose had been made to tingle before; my eyes have before been made to glisten by this soul-moving beauty; but so very much affected, I never was — For trying to check my sensibility, it was too strong for me, and I even sobbed — Yes, by my soul, I audibly sobbed, and was forced to turn from her before she had well finished her affecting speech.

I want, methinks, now I have owned the odd sensation, to describe it to thee — The thing was so strange to me — — Something choaking, as it were, in my throat — I know not how — Yet, I must needs say, though I am out of countenance upon the recollection, that there was something very pretty in it; and I wish I could know it again, that I might have a more perfect idea of it and be better able to describe it to thee.

But this effect of her joy on such an occasion gives me a high notion of what that virtue must be (what other name can I call it?) which in a mind so capable of delicate transport, should be able to make so charming a creature, in her very bloom, all frost and snow to every advance of love from the man she hates not. This must be all from

education too — Must it not, Belford? Can education have stronger force in a woman's heart than nature? — Sure it cannot. But if it can, how entirely right are parents to cultivate their daughters minds, and to inspire them with notions of reserve and distance to our sex; and, indeed, to make them think highly of their own! For pride is an excellent substitute, let me tell thee, where virtue shines not out, as the sun, in its own unborrowed lustre.

LETTER LI.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

AND now it is time to confess (and yet I know that thy conjectures are aforehand with my exposition) that this captain Tomlinson, who is so great a favorite with my charmer, and who takes so much delight in healing breaches, and reconciling differences, is neither a greater man nor a less, than honest Patrick M^cDonald, attended by a discarded footman of his own finding out.

Thou knowest what a various-lived rascal he is; and to what better hopes born and educated. But that ingenious knack of forgery, for which he was expelled the Dublin University, and a detection since in evidenceship, have been his ruin. For these have thrown him from one country to another; and at last, into the way of life, which

would make him a fit husband for Miss Howe's Townsend with her contrabands. He is, thou knowest, admirably qualified for any enterprize that requires adroitness and solemnity. And can there, after all, be a higher piece of justice, than to keep one smuggler in readiness to play against another?

“ Well but, Lovelace (methinks thou questionest) how camest thou to venture upon such a contrivance as this, when, as thou hast told me, the Lady used to be a month at a time at this uncle's; and must, therefore, in all probability, know, that there was not a captain Tomlinson in all the neighbourhood; at least no one of the name so intimate with him, as this man pretends to be? ” —

This objection, Jack, is so natural a one, that I could not help observing to my charmer, that she must surely have heard her uncle speak of this gentleman. No, she said, she never had. Besides, she had not been at her uncle Harlowe's for near ten months (this I had heard her say before): and there were several gentlemen who used the same green, whom she knew not.

We are all very ready, thou knowest, to believe what we like.

And what was the reason, thinkest thou, that she had not been for so long time at this uncle's? — Why, this old sinner, who imagines himself entitled to call me to account for my freedoms with the sex, has lately fallen into familiarities, as it is suspected, with his housekeeper; who assumes airs

upon it. — A cursed deluding sex! — In youth, middle age, or dotage, they take us all in.

Dost thou not see, however, that this housekeeper knows nothing, nor is to know any thing, of the treaty of reconciliation designed to be set on foot; and, therefore, the uncle always comes to the captain, the captain goes not to the uncle? And this I furnished to the Lady. And then it was a natural suggestion, that the captain was the rather applied to, as he is a stranger to the rest of the family — Need I tell thee the meaning of all this?

But this intrigue of the ancient is a piece of private history, the truth of which my beloved cares not to own, and indeed affects to disbelieve: as she does also some puiſny gallantries of her foolish brother; which, by way of recrimination, I have hinted at, without naming my informant in their family.

“ Well but, methinks, thou questionest again, is it not probable that Miss Howe will make inquiry after such a man as Tomlinson? — And when she cannot — ”

I know what thou wouldst say — But I have no doubt, that Wilson will be so good, if I desire it, as to give into my own hands any letter that may be brought by Collins to his house, for a week to come. And now I hope thou art satisfied.

I will conclude with a short story.

“ Two neighbouring sovereigns were at war together, about some pitiful chuck-farthing thing or other; no matter what; for the least trifles will set princes and children at loggerheads. Their armies had been drawn up in battalia some days, and the

news of a decisive action was expected every hour to arrive at each court. At last, issue was joined; a bloody battle was fought; and a fellow, who had been a spectator of it, arriving with the news of a complete victory, at the capital of one of the princes some time before the appointed couriers, the bells were set a ringing, bonfires and illuminations were made, and the people went to bed intoxicated with joy and good liquor. But the next day all was reversed: the victorious enemy, pursuing his advantage, was expected every hour at the gates of the almost defenceless capital. The first reporter was hereupon sought for, and found; and being questioned, pleaded a great deal of merit, in that he had, in so dismal a situation, taken such a space of time from the distress of his fellow citizens, and given it to festivity, as were the hours between the false good news and the real bad.

Do thou, Belford, make the application. This I know, that I have given greater joy to my beloved, than she had thought would so soon fall to her share. And as the human life is properly said to be chequer-work, no doubt but a person of her prudence will make the best of it, and set off so much good against so much bad, in order to strike as just a balance as possible.

The Lady in three several letters, acquaints her friend with the most material passages and conversations contained in those of Mr. Lovelace preceding. These are her words, on relating what the commission of the pretended Tomlinson was,

after the apprehensions that his distant inquiry had given her :

At last, my dear, all these doubts and fears were cleared up, and banished; and, in their place, a delightful prospect was opened to me. For it comes happily out (but at present it must be an absolute secret, for reasons which I shall mention in the sequel) that the gentleman was sent by my uncle Harlowe (I thought he could not be angry with me for ever); all owing to the conversation that passed between your good Mr. Hickman and him. For altho' Mr. Hickman's application was too harshly rejected at the time, my uncle could not but think better of it afterwards, and of the arguments that worthy gentleman used in my favor.

Who, upon a passionate repulse, would despair of having a reasonable request granted?—Who would not by gentleness and condescension, endeavour to leave favorable impressions upon an angry mind; which, when it comes coolly to reflect, may induce it to work itself into a condescending temper? To request a favor, as I have often said, is one thing; to challenge it as our due, is another. And what right has a petitioner to be angry at a repulse, if he has not a right to demand what he sues for as a debt?

She describes captain Tomlinson, on his breakfast visit, to be, a grave good sort of man. And in another place, a genteel man, of great gravity, and a good aspect; she believes upwards of fifty

years of age. I liked him, says she, as soon as I saw him.

As her prospects are now, as she says, more favorable than heretofore, she wishes, that her hopes of Mr. Lovelace's so often promised reformation were better grounded than she is afraid they can be.

We have both been extremely puzzled, my dear, says she, to reconcile some parts of Mr. Lovelace's character with other parts of it: his good with his bad; such of the former in particular, as, his generosity to his tenants; his bounty to the innkeeper's daughter; his readiness to put me upon doing kind things by my good Norton, and others.

A strange mixture in his mind, as I have told him! For he is certainly (as I have reason to say, looking back upon his past behaviour to me in twenty instances) a hard-hearted man.—Indeed, my dear, I have thought more than once, that he had rather see me in tears than give me reason to be pleased with him.

My cousin Morden says, that free-livers are remorseless. And so they must be in the very nature of things.

Mr. Lovelace is a proud man. We have both long ago observed, that he is. And I am truly afraid that his very generosity is more owing to his pride and his vanity, than to that philanthropy (shall I call it?) which distinguishes a beneficent mind.

Money he values not, but as a means to support his pride and his independence. And it is easy, as I have often thought, for a person to part with a secondary appetite, when, by so doing, he can promote or gratify a first.

I am afraid, my dear, that there must have been some fault in his education. His natural bias was not, I fancy, sufficiently attended to. He was instructed, perhaps, (as his power was likely to be large) to do good and beneficent actions; but not, I doubt, from proper motives.

If he had; his generosity would not have stopt at pride, but would have struck into humanity; and then would he not have contented himself with doing praise-worthy things by fits and starts, or, as if relying on the doctrine of merits, he hoped by a good action to atone for a bad one; but he would have been uniformly noble, and done the good for its own sake.

O my dear! what a lot have I drawn! Pride this poor man's virtue; and revenge his other predominating quality! — This one consolation, however, remains: he is not an infidel, an unbeliever: had he been an infidel, there would have been no room at all for hope of him; but (priding himself as he does, in his fertile invention) he would have been utterly abandoned, irreclaimable, and a savage.

When she comes to relate those occasions, which Mr. Lovelace in his narrative acknowledges himself to be affected by, she thus expresses herself:

He endeavoured, as once before, to conceal his emotion. But why, my dear, should these men (for Mr. Lovelace is not singular in this) think themselves above giving these beautiful proofs of a feeling heart? Were it in my power again to chuse, or to refuse, I would reject the man with contempt, who sought to suppress, or offered to deny, the power of being visibly affected upon proper occasions, as either a savage-hearted creature, or as one who was so ignorant of the principal glory of the human nature, as to place his pride in a barbarous insensibility.

These lines translated from Juvenal by Mr. Tate, I have been often pleased with:

Compassion proper to mankind appears :
Which nature witness'd, when she lent us tears.
Of tender sentiments we only give
These proofs: To weep is our prerogative:
To show by pitying looks, and melting eyes,
How with a suffering friend we sympathize.
Who can all sense of others ills escape,
'Is but a brute at best, in human shape.

It cannot but yield me some pleasure, hardly as I have sometimes thought of the people of the house, that such a good man, as captain Tomlinson, had spoken well of them, upon inquiry.

And here I stop a minute, my dear, to receive, in fancy, your kind congratulation.

My next, I hope, will confirm my present, and open still more agreeable prospects. Mean time be

assured, that there cannot possibly any good fortune befall me, which I shall look upon with equal delight to that I have in your friendship.

My thankful compliments to your good Mr. Hickman, to whose kind intervention I am so much obliged on this occasion, conclude me, my dearest Miss Howe,

Your ever affectionate and grateful

CL. HARLOWE.

LETTER LII.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

Tuesday, *May 30.*

I HAVE a letter from Lord M.. Such a one as I would wish for, if I intended matrimony. But as matters are circumstanced, I cannot think of showing it to my beloved.

My Lord regrets, "that he is not to be the Lady's nuptial father. He seems apprehensive that I have still, specious as my reasons are, some mischief in my head."

He graciously consents, "that I may marry when I please; and offers one or both of my cousins to assist my bride; and to support her spirits on the occasion, since, as he understands, she is so much afraid to venture with me.

“Pritchard, he tells me, has his final orders to draw up deeds for assigning over to me in perpetuity 1000 l. per annum; which he will execute the same hour that the Lady in person owns her marriage.”

He consents, “that the jointure be made from my own estate.”

He wishes, “that the Lady would have accepted of his draught; and commends me for tendering it to her. But reproaches me for pride in not keeping it myself. What the right side gives up, the left, he says, may be the better for.”

The girls, the left-sided girls, he means.

With all my heart. If I can have my Clarissa, the devil take every thing else.

A good deal of other stuff writes this stupid Peer; scribbling in several places half a dozen lines, apparently for no other reason, but to bring in as many musty words in an old saw.

If thou askest, “How I can manage, since my beloved will wonder, that I have not an answer from my Lord to such a letter as I wrote to him; and if I own I have one, will expect that I should show it to her, as I did my letter?”—This I answer—That I can be informed by Pritchard, that my Lord has the gout in his right hand; and has ordered him to attend me in form, for my particular orders about the transfer: and I can see Pritchard, thou knowest, at the King’s Arms, or wherever I please, at an hour’s warning; though he be at M. Hall, I in town; and he, by word of mouth, can acquaint me with every thing in my Lord’s letter that is necessary for my charmer to know.

Whenever it suits me, I can restore the old Peer to his right hand, and then can make him write a much more sensible letter than this that he has now sent me.

Thou knowest, that an adroitness in the art of manual imitation, was one of my earliest attainments. It has been said, on this occasion, that had I been a bad man in meum and tuum matters, I should not have been fit to live. As to the girls, we hold it no sin to cheat them. And are we not told, that in being well deceived consists the whole of human happiness?

Wednesday, *May 31.*

All still happier and happier. A very high honor done me: a chariot, instead of a coach, permitted, purposely to indulge me in the subject of subjects.

Our discourse in this sweet airing turned upon our future manner of life. The day is bashfully promised me. Soon was the answer to my repeated urgency. Our equipage, our servants, our liveries, were parts of the delightful subject. A desire that the wretch who had given me intelligence out of the family (honest Joseph Leman) might not be one of our menials; and her resolution to have her faithful Hannah, whether recovered or not; were signified, and both as readily assented to.

Her wishes, from my attentive behaviour, when with her at St. Paul's, that I would often accompany her

her to the Divine Service, were gently intimated, and as readily engaged for. I assured her, that I ever had respected the clergy in a body; and some individuals of them (her Dr. Lewen for one) highly: and that were not going to church an act of religion, I thought it (as I told thee once) a most agreeable sight to see rich and poor, all of a company, as I might say, assembled once a week in one place, and each in his or her best attire, to worship the God that made them. Nor could it be a hardship upon a man liberally educated, to make one on so solemn an occasion, and to hear the harangue of a man of letters (though far from being the principal part of the service, as it is too generally looked upon to be) whose studies having taken a different turn from his own, he must always have something new to say.

She shook her head, and repeated the word new: but looked as if willing to be satisfied for the present with this answer. To be sure, Jack, she means to do great despight to his Satanic Majesty in her hopes of reforming me. No wonder, therefore, if he exerts himself to prevent her, and to be revenged—But how came this in?—I am ever of party against myself.—One day, I fancy, I shall hate myself on recollecting what I am about at this instant. But I must stay till then. We must all of us do something to repent of.

The reconciliation prospect was enlarged upon. If her uncle Harlowe will but pave the way to it, and if it can be brought about, she shall be happy.

—Happy, with a sigh, as it is now possible she can be!—

She won't forbear, Jack!

I told her, that I had heard from Pritchard, just before we set out on our airing, and expected him in town to morrow from Lord M., to take my directions. I spoke with gratitude of my Lord's kindness to me, and with pleasure of Lady Sarah's, Lady Betty's, and my two cousins Montagues' veneration for her: as also of his Lordship's concern that his gout hindered him from writing a reply with his own hand to my last.

She pitied my Lord. She pitied poor Mrs. Fetchville too; for she had the goodness to inquire after her. The dear creature pitied every body that seemed to want pity. Happy in her own prospects, she had leisure to look abroad, and wishes every body equally happy.

It is likely to go very hard with Mrs. Fetchville. Her face which she had valued herself upon, will be utterly ruined. "This good, however, as I could not but observe, she may reap from so great an evil—As the greater malady generally swallows up the less, she may have a grief on this occasion, that may diminish the other grief and make it tolerable."

I had a gentle reprimand for this light turn on so heavy an evil——"For what was the loss of beauty to the loss of a good husband?" Excellent creature!

Her hopes (and her pleasure upon these hopes) that Miss Howe's mother would be reconciled to

her, were also mentioned. Good Mrs. Howe was her word, for a woman so covetous, and so remorseless in her covetousness, that no one else will call her good. But this dear creature has such an extension in her love, as to be capable of valuing the most insignificant animal related to those whom she respects. Love me, and love my dog, I have heard Lord M. say.—Who knows, but that I may in time, in compliment to myself, bring her to think well of thee, Jack?

But what am I about?—Am I not all this time arraigning my own heart?—I know I am, by the remorse I feel in it, while my pen bears testimony to her excellence. But yet I must add (for no selfish consideration shall hinder me from doing justice to this admirable creature) that in this conversation she demonstrated so much prudent knowledge in every thing that relates to that part of the domestic management which falls under the care of a mistress of a family, that I believe she has no equal of her years in the world.

But, indeed, I know not the subject on which she does not talk with admirable distinction; inasmuch that could I but get over my prejudices against matrimony, and resolve to walk in the dull beaten path of my ancestors, I should be the happiest of men—And if I cannot, perhaps, I may be ten times more to be pitied than she.

My heart, my heart, Belford, is not to be trusted—I break off, to re-peruse some of Miss Howe's virulence.

* * *

Curfed letters, thefe of Mifs Howe, Jack! —
Do thou turn back to thofe of mine, where I take
notice of them. — I proceed —

Upon the whole, my charmer was all gentle-
nefs, all eafe, all ferenity, throughout this fweet
excursion. Nor had ſhe reafon to be otherwife:
for it being the firſt time that I had the honor of
her company alone, I was reſolved to encourage
her, by my reſpectfulnefs to repeat the favor.

On our return, I found the counſellor's clerk
waiting for me, with a draught of the marriage
ſettlements.

They are drawn, with only the neceſſary vari-
ations, from thoſe made for my mother. The
original of which (now returned by the counſellor)
as well as the new draughts, I have put into my
beloved's hands.

Theſe ſettlements of my mother made the law-
yer's work eaſy; nor can ſhe have a better preced-
ent; the great Lord S. . having ſettled them, at the
requeſt of my mother's relations; all the difference,
my charmer's are 100 l. per annum more than my
mother's.

I offered to read to her the old deed, while ſhe
looked over the draught; for ſhe had refuſed her
preſence at the examination with the clerk: but
this ſhe alſo declined.

I ſuppoſe ſhe did not care to hear of ſo many chil-
dren, firſt, ſecond, third, fourth, fifth, ſixth, and
ſeventh ſons, and as many daughters, to be begotten
upon the body of the ſaid Clariffa Harlowe.

Charming matrimonial recitatives! — though it is always said lawfully begotten too — As if a man could beget children unlawfully upon the body of his own wife. — But thinkest thou not that these arch rogues the lawyers hereby intimate, that a man may have children by his wife before marriage? — This must be what they mean. Why will these sly fellows put an honest man in mind of such rogueries? — But hence, as in numberless other instances, we see, that Law and Gospel are two very different things.

Dorcas, in our absence, tried to get at the wainscot-box in the dark closet. But it cannot be done without violence. And to run a risk of consequence now, for mere curiosity sake, would be inexcusable.

Mrs. Sinclair and the nymphs are all of opinion, that I am now so much a favorite, and have such a visible share in her confidence, and even in her affections, that I may do what I will, and plead for excuse violence of passion; which, as they will have it, makes violence of action pardonable with their sex; as well as an allowed extenuation with the unconcerned of both sexes; and they all offer their helping hands. Why not? they say: has she not passed for my wife before them all? — And is she not in a fine way of being reconciled to her friends? And was not the want of that reconciliation the pretence for postponing consummation?

They again urge me, since it is so difficult to make night my friend, to an attempt in the day. They remind me, that the situation of their house

is such, that no noises can be heard out of it; and ridicule me for making it necessary for a Lady to be undressed. It was not always so with me, poor old man! Sally told me; saucily flinging her handkerchief in my face.

LETTER LIII.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

Friday, *June 2.*

NOTWITHSTANDING my studied for politeness and complaisance for some days past; and tho' I have wanted courage to throw the mask quite aside; yet I have made the dear creature more than once look about her, by the warm, though decent expression of my passion. I have brought her to own, that I am more than indifferent with her: but as to love, which I pressed her to acknowledge, What need of acknowledgments of that sort when a woman consents to marry? — And once repulsing me with displeasure, The proof of the true love I was vowing for her, was respect, not freedom. And offering to defend myself, she told me, that all the conception she had been able to form of a faulty passion, was, that it must demonstrate itself as mine sought to do.

I endeavoured to justify my passion, by laying over-delicacy at her door. Over-delicacy, she said, was not my fault, if it were hers. She must

plainly tell me, that I appeared to her incapable of distinguishing what were the requisites of a pure mind. Perhaps, had the Libertine presumption to imagine, that there was no difference in heart, nor any but what proceeded from difference of education and custom, between the pure and the impure — And yet custom alone, as she observed, if I did so think, would make a second nature, as well in good as in bad habits.

* * *

I have just now been called to account for some innocent liberties which I thought myself entitled to take before the women; as they suppose us to be married, and now within view of consummation.

I took the lecture very hardly; and with impatience wished for the happy day and hour when I might call her all my own, and meet with no check from a niceness that had no example.

She looked at me with a bashful kind of contempt. I thought it contempt, and required the reason for it, not being conscious of offence, as I told her.

This is not the first time, Mr. Lovelace, said she, that I have had cause to be displeased with you, when you, perhaps, have not thought yourself exceptionable. — But, Sir, let me tell you, that the married state, in my eye, is a state of purity, and (I think she told me) not of licentiousness; so, at least, I understood her.

Marriage purity, Jack! — Very comical, 'faith — Yet, sweet dears, half the female world ready to run away with a rake, because he is a rake; and for no

other reason; nay, every other reason against their choice of such a one.

But have not you and I, Belford, seen young wives, who would be thought modest; and when maids, were fantastically shy, permit freedoms in public from their uxorious husbands, which have shown, that both of them have forgotten what belongs either to prudence or decency? While every modest eye has sunk under the shameless effrontery, and every modest face been covered with blushes for those who could not blush.

I once, upon such an occasion, proposed to a circle of a dozen; thus scandalized, to withdraw; since they must needs see that as well the Lady, as the Gentleman, wanted to be in private. This motion had its effect upon the amorous pair; and I was applauded for the check given to their licentiousness.

But, upon another occasion of this sort, I acted a little more in character. For I ventured to make an attempt upon a bride, which I should not have had the courage to make, had not the unblushing passiveness with which she received her fond husband's public toyings (looking round her with triumph rather than with shame, upon every Lady present) incited my curiosity to know if the same complacency might not be shown to a private friend. 'Tis true, I was in honor obliged to keep the secret. But I never saw the turtles bill afterwards, but I thought of number two to the same female, and in my heart thanked the fond husband for the lesson he had taught his wife.

From what I have said, thou wilt see, that I approve of my beloved's exception to public loves. That, I hope, is all the charming Icicle means by marriage purity. But to return.

From the whole of what I have mentioned to have passed between my beloved and me, thou wilt gather, that I have not been a mere dangler, a Hickman, in the passed days, though not absolutely active, and a Lovelace.

The dear creature now considers herself as my wife-elect. The unfaddened heart, no longer prudish, will not now, I hope, give the false turn to every address of the man she dislikes not. And yet she must keep up so much reserve, as will justify past inflexibilities. "Many and many a pretty soul would yield, were she not afraid that the man she favored would think the worse of her for it." This is also a part of the rake's creed. But should she resent ever so strongly, she cannot now break with me; since, if she does, there will be an end of the family reconciliation, and that in a way highly discreditable to herself.

Saturday, June 3.

Just returned from Doctors-Commons. I have been endeavouring to get a licence. Very true, Jack. I have the mortification to find a difficulty, as the Lady is of rank and fortune, and as there is no consent of father or next friend, in obtaining this all-fettering instrument.

I made report of this difficulty. "It is very right, she says, that such difficulties should be made." — But not to a man of my known fortune, surely, Jack, tho' the woman were the daughter of a Duke.

I asked, if she approved of the settlements? She said, she had compared them with my mother's, and had no objection to them. She had written to Miss Howe upon the subject, she owned; and to inform her of our present situation *.

* * *

Just now, in high good humor, my beloved returned me the draughts of the settlements; a copy of which I had sent to captain Tomlinson. She complimented me, "that she never had any doubt of my honor in cases of this nature."

In matters between man and man nobody ever had, thou knowest.

I had need, thou wilt say, to have some good qualities.

Great faults and great virtues are often found in the same person. In nothing very bad, but as to women: and did not one of them begin with me?

We have held, that women have no souls. I am a very Turk in this point, and willing to believe they have not. And if so, to whom shall I be accountable for what I do to them? Nay, if souls they have, as there is no sex in Ethereals, nor need of any, what plea can a Lady hold of injuries done her in her Lady-state, when there is an end of her Lady-ship?

* As this letter of the Lady to Miss Howe contains no new matter, but what may be collected from those of Mr. Lovelace, it is omitted.

LETTER LIV.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

Monday, *June* 5.

I AM now almost in despair of succeeding with this charming frost-piece by love or gentleness. — A copy of the draughts, as I told thee, has been sent to captain Tomlinson; and that by a special messenger. Engrossments are proceeding with. I have been again at the Commons. — Should in all probability have procured a licence by Mallory's means, had not Mallory's friend the proctor been suddenly sent for to Cheshunt, to make an old Lady's Will. Pritchard has told me by word of mouth, though my charmer saw him not, all that was necessary for her to know in the letter my Lord wrote, which I could not show her; and taken my directions about the estates to be made over to me on my nuptials. — Yet, with all these favorable appearances, no conceding moment to be found, no improveable tenderness to be raised.

But never, I believe, was there so true, so delicate a modesty in the human mind as in that of this Lady. And this has been my security all along; and, in spite of Miss Howe's advice to her, will be so still; since, if her delicacy be a fault, she can no more overcome it than I can my aversion to matrimony. Habit, habit, Jack, feest thou not? may subject us both to weaknesses.

And should she not have charity for me, as I have for her?

Twice, indeed, with rapture, which once she called rude, did I salute her; and each time resenting the freedom, did she retire; though, to do her justice, she favored me again with her presence at my first entreaty, and took no notice of the cause of her withdrawing.

Is it policy to show so open a resentment for innocent liberties, which, in her situation, she must so soon forgive.

Yet the woman who resents not initiatory freedoms must be lost. For love is an encroacher. Love never goes backward. Love is always aspiring: always must aspire. Nothing but the highest act of love can satisfy an indulged love. And what advantages has a lover who values not breaking the peace, over his mistress who is solicitous to keep it!

I have now at this instant wrought myself up, for the dozenth time, to a half-resolution. A thousand agreeable things I have to say to her. She is in the diningroom. Just gone up. She always expects me when there.

* * *

High displeasure! — followed by an abrupt departure.

I sat down by her. I took both her hands in mine. I would have it so. All gentle my voice. Her father mentioned with respect. Her mother with reverence. Even her brother amicably spoken of. I never thought I could have wished so ardently, as

I told her I did wish, for a reconciliation with her family.

A sweet and grateful flush then overspread her fair face; a gentle sigh now and then heaved her handkerchief.

I perfectly longed to hear from captain Tomlinson. It was impossible for her uncle to find fault with the draught of the settlements. I would not, however, be understood by sending them down, that I intended to put it in her uncle's power to delay my happy day. When, when, was it to be?

I would hasten again to the Commons; and would not return without the licence.

The Lawn I proposed to retire to, as soon as the happy ceremony was over. This day and that day I proposed.

It was time enough to name the day, when the settlements were completed, and the licence obtained. Happy should she be, could the kind captain Tomlinson obtain her uncle's presence privately.

A good hint!—It may, perhaps, be improved upon—Either for a delay or a pacifier.

No new delays for heaven's sake, I besought her; and reproached her gently for the past. Name but the day—(an early day, I hoped it would be, in the following week) that I might hail its approach, and number the tardy hours.

My cheek reclined on her shoulder—kissing her hands by turns. Rather bashfully than angrily reluctant, her hand sought to be withdrawn; her shoulder avoiding my reclined cheek—Apparently loth, and more loth, to quarrel with me; her

downcast eye confessing more than her lips could utter. Now surely, thought I, is my time to try if she can forgive a still bolder freedom than I had ever yet taken.

I then gave her struggling hands liberty. I put one arm round her waist: I imprinted a kiss on her sweet lips, with a *Be quiet only*, and an averted face, as if she feared another.

Encouraged by so gentle a repulse, the tenderest things I said; and then, with my other hand, drew aside the handkerchief that concealed the beauty of beauties, and pressed with my burning lips the most charming breast that ever my ravished eyes beheld.

A very contrary passion to that which gave her bosom so delightful a swell, immediately took place. She struggled out of my encircling arms with indignation. I detained her reluctant hand. Let me go, said she. I see there is no keeping terms with you. Base encroacher! Is this the design of your flattering speeches? — Far as matters have gone, I will for ever renounce you. You have an odious heart. Let me go, I tell you. —

I was forced to obey, and she flung from me, repeating base, and adding flattering, encroacher.

* * *

In vain have I urged by Dorcas for the promised favor of dining with her. She would not dine at all. She could not.

But why makes she every inch of her person thus sacred? — So near the time too, that she must

suppose, that all will be my own by deed of purchase and settlement?

She has read, no doubt, of the art of the Eastern monarchs, who sequester themselves from the eyes of their subjects, in order to excite their adoration, when, upon some solemn occasions, they think fit to appear in public.

But let me ask thee, Belford, whether, on these solemn occasions, the preceding cavalcade; here a great officer, and there a great minister, with their satellites, and glaring equipages; do not prepare the eyes of the wondering beholders, by degrees, to bear the blaze of Canopy'd Majesty (what though but an ugly old man, perhaps, himself? yet) glittering in the collected riches of his vast empire?

And should not my beloved for her own sake, descend, by degrees, from Goddess-hood into humanity? If it be pride that restrains her, ought not that pride to be punished? If, as in the Eastern emperors, it be art as well as pride, art is what she of all women need not use. If shame, what a shame to be ashamed to communicate to her adorer's sight the most admirable of her personal graces?

Let me perish, Belford, if I would not forego the brightest diadem in the world, for the pleasure of seeing a twin Lovelace at each charming breast, drawing from it his first sustenance; the pious task, for physical reasons, continued for one month and no more!

I now, methinks, behold this most charming of women in this sweet office: her conscious eye now dropt on one, now on the other, with a sigh of maternal tenderness; and then raised up to my delighted eye, full of wishes, for the sake of the pretty varlets, and for her own sake, that I would deign to legitimate; that I would condescend to put on the nuptial fetters.

LETTER LV.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

Monday Afternoon.

A LETTER received from the worthy captain Tomlinson has introduced me into the presence of my charmer sooner than perhaps I should otherwise have been admitted.

Sullen her brow, at her first entrance into the diningroom. But I took no notice of what had passed, and her anger of itself subsided.

“The captain, after letting me know, that he chose not to write, till he had the promised draught of the settlements, acquaints me, that his friend Mr. John Harlowe, in their first conference (which was held as soon as he got down) was extremely surpris’d and even grieved (as he feared he would be) to hear that we were not married. The world, he said, who knew my character, would be very censorious, were it owned, that we had lived so long

long together unmarried in the same lodgings; altho' our marriage were now to be ever so publicly celebrated.

"His nephew James, he was sure, would make a great handle of it against any motion that might be made towards a reconciliation; and with the greater success, as there was not a family in the kingdom more jealous of their honor than theirs."

This is true of the Harlowes, Jack: they have been called the proud Harlowes: and I have ever found, that all young honor is supercilious and touchy.

But feest thou not how right I was in my endeavour to persuade my fair one to allow her uncle's friend to think us married; especially as he came prepared to believe it; and as her uncle hoped it was so? — But nothing on earth is so perverse, as a woman when she is set upon carrying a point and has a meek man, or one who loves his peace, to deal with.

My beloved was vexed. She pulled out her handkerchief: but was more inclined to blame me, than herself.

Had you kept your word, Mr. Lovelace, and left me when we came to town — And there she stopt; for she knew, that it was her own fault that we were not married before we left the country; and how could I leave her afterwards, while her brother was plotting to carry her off by violence?

Nor has this brother yet given over his machinations.

For, as the captain proceeds, "Mr. John Harlowe owned to him (but in confidence) that his nephew is at this time busied in endeavouring to find out where we are; being assured (as I am not to be heard of at any of my relations, or at my usual lodgings) that we are together. And that we are not married, is plain, as he will have it, from Mr. Hickman's applications so lately made to her uncle; and which was seconded by Mrs. Norton to her mother. And her brother cannot bear, that I should enjoy such a triumph unmolested."

A profound sigh, and the handkerchief again lifted to the eye. But did not the sweet soul deserve this turn upon her, for feloniously resolving to rob me of herself, had the application made by Hickman succeeded?

I read on to the following effect:

"Why (asked Mr. Harlowe) was it said to his other inquiring friend, that we were married; and that by his niece's woman, who ought to know? Who could give convincing reasons, no doubt" —

Here again she wept; took a turn cross the room, then returned — Read on, said she —

Will you, my dearest life, read it yourself?

I will take the letter with me, by and by — I cannot see to read it just now, wiping her eyes. — Read on — Let me hear it all — that I may know your sentiments upon this letter, as well as give my own.

"The captain then told uncle John, the reasons

that induced me to give out that we were married; and the conditions on which my beloved was brought to countenance it; which had kept us at the most punctilious distance.

“ But still Mr. Harlowe objected my character. And went away dissatisfied. And the captain was also so much concerned, that he cared not to write what the result of his first conference was.

“ But in the next, which was held on receipt of the draughts, at the captain’s house (as the former was, for the greater secrecy) when the old gentleman had read them, and had the captain’s opinion, he was much better pleased. And yet he declared, that it would not be easy to persuade any other person of his family to believe so favorably of the matter, as he was now willing to believe, were they to know that we had lived so long together unmarried.

“ And then, the captain says, his dear friend made a proposal: — It was this — That we should marry out of hand, but as privately as possible, as indeed he found we intended (for he could have no objection to the draughts) — But yet, he expected to have present one trusty friend of his own for his better satisfaction ” —

Here I stopt, with a design to be angry — But she desiring me to read on, I obeyed.

“ — But that it should pass to every one living, except to that trusty person, to himself, and to the captain, that we were married from the time that we had lived together in one house; and that

this time should be made to agree with that of Mr. Hickman's application to him from Miss Howe."

"This, my dearest life, said I, is a very considerate proposal. We have nothing to do, but to caution the people below properly on this head. I did not think your uncle Harlowe capable of hitting upon such a charming expedient as this. But you see how much his heart is in the reconciliation.

This was the return I met with — You have always, as a mark of your politeness, let me know, how meanly you think of every one of my family.

Yet, thou wilt think, Belford, that I could forgive her for the reproach.

"The captain does not know, he says, how this proposal will be relished by us. But, for his part, he thinks it an expedient that will obviate many difficulties, and may possibly put an end to Mr. James Harlowe's further designs: and on this account he has, by the uncle's advice, already declared to two several persons, by whose means it may come to that young gentleman's ears, that he (captain Tomlinson) has very great reason to believe, that we were married soon after Mr. Hickman's application was rejected.

"And this, Mr. Lovelace (says the captain) will enable you to pay a compliment to the family, that will not be unsuitable to the generosity of some of the declarations you were pleased to make to the Lady before me (and which Mr. John Harlowe may make some advantage of in favor of a reconciliation); in that you have not demanded your Lady's estate so soon as you were entitled to

make the demand. " An excellent contriver surely she must think this worthy Mr Tomlinson to be!

But the captain adds, " that if either the Lady or I disapprove of his report of our marriage, he will retract it. Nevertheless he must tell me, that Mr. John Harlowe is very much set upon this way of proceeding; as the only one, in his opinion, capable of being improved into a general reconciliation. But if we do acquiesce in it, he beseeches my fair one not to suspend my day, that he may be authorized in what he says, as to the truth of the main fact (how conscientious this good man!): nor must it be expected, he says, that her uncle will take one step towards the wished for reconciliation, till the solemnity is actually over. "

He adds, " that he shall be very soon in town on other affairs; and then proposes to attend us, and give us a more particular account of all that has passed, or shall further pass, between Mr. Harlowe and him. "

Well, my dearest life, what say you to your uncle's expedient? Shall I write to the captain, and acquaint him, that we have no objection to it?

She was silent for a few minutes. At last, with a sigh, see, Mr. Lovelace, said she, what you have brought me to, by treading after you in such crooked paths! — See what disgrace I have incurred! — Indeed you have not acted like a wise man.

My beloved creature, do you not remember, how earnestly I besought the honor of your hand

before we came to town? — Had I been then favored —

Well, well, Sir — There has been much amiss somewhere; that's all I will say at present. And since what's past cannot be recalled, my uncle must be obeyed, I think.

Charmingly dutiful! — I had nothing then to do, that I might not be behind hand with the worthy captain and her uncle, but to press for the day. This I fervently did. But (as I might have expected) she repeated her former answer; to wit, that when the settlements were completed; when the licence was actually obtained; it would be time enough to name the day: and, O Mr. Lovelace, said she, turning from me with a grace inimitably tender, her handkerchief at her eyes, what a happiness, if my dear uncle could be prevailed upon to be personally a father, on this occasion, to the poor fatherless girl! —

What's the matter with me! — Whence this dew-drop! — A tear! — As I hope to be saved, it is a tear, Jack! — Very ready methinks! — Only on reciting! — But her lovely image was before me, in the very attitude she spoke the words — And, indeed, at the time she spoke them, these lines of Shakespeare came into my head:

Thy heart is big. Get thee apart, and weep!
Passion, I see, is catching: — For my eyes,
Seeing those beads of sorrow stand in thine,
Begin to water —

I withdrew, and wrote to the captain to the following effect — “ I desired, that he would be so good as to acquaint his dear friend, that we entirely acquiesced with what he had proposed; and had already properly cautioned the gentlewomen of the house, and their servants, as well as our own: and to tell him, that if he would in person give me the blessing of his dear niece’s hand, it would crown the wishes of both. In this case, I consented, that his own day, as I presumed it would be a short one, should be ours: that by this means the secret would be with fewer persons: that I myself, as well as he, thought the ceremony could not be too privately performed; and this not only for the sake of the wise end he had proposed to answer by it, but because I would not have Lord M.. think himself slighted; since that nobleman, as I had told him (the captain) had once intended to be our nuptial-father; and actually made the offer; but that we had declined to accept of it, and that for no other reason than to avoid a public wedding; which his beloved niece would not come into while she was in disgrace with her friends — But that, if he chose not to do us this honor, I wished that captain Tomlinson might be the trusty person whom he would have to be present on the happy occasion. ”

I showed this letter to my fair one. She was not displeased with it. So, Jack, we cannot now move too fast, as to settlements and licence: the day is her uncle’s day, or captain Tomlinson’s

perhaps, as shall best suit the occasion. Miss Howe's smuggling-scheme is now surely provided against in all events.

But I will not by anticipation make thee a judge of all the benefits that may flow from this my elaborate contrivance. Why will these girls put me upon my master-strokes?

And now for a little mine which I am getting ready to spring. The first that I have sprung, and at the rate I go on (now a resolution, and now a remorse) perhaps the last that I shall attempt to spring.

A little mine, I call it. But it may be attended with great effects. I shall not, however, absolutely depend upon the success of it, having much more effectual ones in reserve. And yet great engines are often moved by small springs. A little spark falling by accident into a powder-magazine, has done more execution in a siege, than an hundred cannon.

Come the worst, the hymeneal torch, and a white sheet, must be my *amende honorable*, as the French have it.

LETTER LVI.

Mr. BELFORD, To ROBERT LOVELACE, Esq.

Tuesday, June 6.

UNSUCCESSFUL as hitherto my application to you has been, I cannot for the heart of me forbear writing once more in behalf of this admirable woman: and yet am unable to account for the zeal which impels me to take her part with an earnestness so sincere.

But all her merit thou acknowledgest; all thy own vileness thou confessest, and even gloriest in it: what hope then of moving so hardened a man? — Yet, as it is not too late, and thou art nevertheless upon the crisis, I am resolved to try what another letter will do. It is but my writing in vain, if it do no good; and if thou wilt let me prevail, I know thou wilt hereafter think me richly entitled to thy thanks.

To argue with thee would be folly. The case cannot require it. I will only entreat thee, therefore, that thou wilt not let such an excellence lose the reward of her vigilant virtue.

I believe, there never were libertines so vile, but purposed, at some future period of their lives, to set about reforming; and let me beg of thee, that thou wilt, in this great article, make thy future repentance as easy, as some time hence thou wilt wish thou hadst made it.

If thou proceedest, I have no doubt, that this affair will end tragically, one way or other. It must. Such a woman must interest both gods and men in her cause. But what I most apprehend, is, that with her own hand, in resentment of perpetrated outrage, she (like another Lucretia) will assert the purity of her heart: or, if her piety preserve her from this violence, that wasting grief will soon put a period to her days. And in either case, will not the remembrance of thy ever-during guilt, and transitory triumph, be a torment of torments to thee?

'Tis a seriously sad thing, after all, that so fine a creature should have fallen into such vile and remorseless hands: for, from thy cradle, as I have heard thee own, thou ever delightedst to sport with and torment the animal, whether bird or beast, that thou lovedst, and hadst a power over.

How different is the case of this fine woman from that of any other whom thou hast seduced! — I need not mention to thee, nor insist upon the striking difference: justice, gratitude, thy interest, thy vows, all engaging thee; and thou certainly loving her, as far as thou art capable of love, above all her sex. She not to be drawn aside by art, or to be made to suffer from credulity, nor for want of wit and discernment (that will be another cutting reflection to so fine a mind as hers): the contention between you only unequal, as it is between naked innocence and armed guilt. In every thing else, as thou ownest, her talents greatly superior

to thine! — What a fate will hers be, if thou art not at last overcome by thy reiterated remorses!

At first, indeed, when I was admitted into her presence (and till I observed her meaning air, and heard her speak) I supposed that she had no very uncommon judgment to boast of: for I made, as I thought, but just allowances for her blossoming youth, and for that loveliness of person, and for that ease and elegance in her dress, which I imagined must have taken up half her time and study to cultivate; and yet I had been prepared by thee to entertain a very high opinion of her sense and her reading. Her choice of this gay fellow, upon such hazardous terms (thought I) is a confirmation that her wit wants that maturity which only years and experience can give it. Her knowledge (argued I to myself) must be all theory; and the complaisance ever conforing with an age so green and so gay, will make so inexperienced a Lady at least forbear to show herself disgusted at freedoms of discourse, in which those present of her own sex, and some of ours (so learned, so well-read, and so travelled) allow themselves.

In this presumption, I ran on; and, having the advantage, as I conceited, of all the company but you, and being desirous to appear in her eyes a mighty clever fellow, I thought I showed away, when I said any foolish things that had more sound than sense in them; and when I made silly jests, which attracted the smiles of thy Sinclair, and the specious Partington: and that Miss Harlowe did not smile too, I thought was owing to her youth

or affectation, or to a mixture of both, perhaps to a greater command of her features. — Little dreamt I, that I was incurring her contempt all the time.

But when, as I said, I heard her speak; which she did not till she had fathomed us all; when I heard her sentiments on two or three subjects, and took notice of that searching eye, darting into the very inmost cells of our frothy brains; by my faith, it made me look about me; and I began to recollect, and be ashamed of all I had said before; in short, was resolved to sit silent, till every one had talked round, to keep my folly in countenance. And then I raised the subjects that she could join in, and which she did join in, so much to the confusion and surprise of every one of us! — For even thou, Lovelace, so noted for smart wit, repartee, and a vein of raillery, that delighteth all who come near thee, sattest in palpable darkness, and lookedst about thee, as well as we.

One instance only, of this, shall I remind thee of?

We talked of wit, and of wit, and aimed at it, bandying it like a ball from one to another, and resting it chiefly with thee, who wert always proud enough and vain enough of the attribute; and then more especially, as thou hadst assembled us, as far as I know, principally to show the Lady thy superiority over us; and us thy triumph over her. And then Tourville (who is always satisfied with wit at second hand; wit upon memory; other men's wit) repeated some verses, as applicable to the subject; which two of us applauded, though full of double entendre. Thou, seeing the Lady's serious

air on one of those repetitions, appliedst thyself to her, desiring her notions of wit: a quality, thou saidst, which every one prized, whether flowing from himself, or found in another.

Then it was that she took all our attention. It was a quality much talked of, she said, but she believed, very little understood. At least, if she might be so free as to give her judgment of it from what had passed in the present conversation, she must say, that wit with men was one thing; with women, another.

This startled us all: — How the women looked! — How they pursed in their mouths! a broad smile the moment before, upon each, from the verses they had heard repeated, so well understood, as we saw, by their looks! — While I besought her to let us know, for our instruction, what wit was with women: for such I was sure it ought to be with men.

Cowley, she said, had defined it prettily by negatives.

Thou desiredst her to repeat his definition.

She did; and with so much graceful ease, and beauty, and propriety of accent, as would have made bad poetry delightful.

A thousand diff'rent shapes it bears;

Comely in thousand shapes appears.

'Tis not a tale, 'tis not a jest,

Admir'd, with laughter, at a feast,

Nor florid talk, which must this title gain:

The proofs of wit for ever must remain.

Much less can that have any place
At which a virgin hides her face.
Such dross the fire must purge away: — 'Tis just
The author blush there, where the reader must.

Here she stopt, looking round her upon us all with conscious superiority, as I thought. Lord, how we stared! Thou attemptedst to give us thy definition of wit, that thou mightest have something to say, and not seem to be surpris'd into silent modesty.

But, as if she cared not to trust thee with the subject, referring to the same author as for his more positive decision, she thus, with the same harmony of voice and accent, emphatically decided upon it:

Wit, like a luxuriant vine,
Unless to virtue's prop it join,
Firm and erect, tow'rd heaven bound,
Though it with beauteous leaves and pleasant
fruit be crown'd,
It lies deform'd, and rotting on the ground.

If thou recollectest this part of the conversation, and how like fools we looked at one another; how much it put us out of conceit with ourselves, and made us fear her, when we found our conversation thus excluded from the very character which our vanity had made us think unquestionably ours; and if thou profitest properly by the recollection; thou

wilt be of my mind, that there is not so much wit in wickedness as we had flattered ourselves there was.

And after all, I have been of opinion ever since that conversation, that the wit of all the rakes and libertines I ever conversed with, from the brilliant Bob Lovelace down to little Johnny Hartop the punster, consists mostly in saying bold and shocking things, with such courage as shall make the modest blush, the impudent laugh, and the ignorant stare.

And why dost thou think I mention these things so *mal à propos*, as it may seem? — Only, let me tell thee, as an instance (among many that might be given from the same evening's conversation) of this fine woman's superiority in those talents which ennoble nature, and dignify her sex — Evidenced not only to each of us, as we offended, but to the flippant Partington, and the grosser, but egregiously hypocritical Sinclair, in the correcting eye, the discouraging blush, in which was mixed as much displeasure as modesty, and sometimes, as the occasion called for it (for we were some of us hardened above the sense of feeling delicate reproof) by the sovereign contempt, mingled with a disdainful kind of pity, that showed at once her own conscious worth, and our despicable worthlessness.

O Lovelace! what then was the triumph, even in my eye, and what is it still upon reflection, of true modesty, of true wit, and true politeness, over frothy jest, laughing impertinence, and an

obscenity so shameful, even to the guilty, that they cannot hint at it but under a double meaning!

Then, as thou hast somewhere observed, all her correctives avowed by her eye. Not poorly, like the generality of her sex, affecting ignorance of meanings too obvious to be concealed; but so resenting, as to show each impudent laughter, the offence given to, and taken by, a purity, that had mistaken its way, when it fell into such company.

Such is the woman, such is the angel, whom thou hast betrayed into thy power, and wouldst deceive and ruin. — Sweet creature! did she but know how she is surrounded (as I then thought, as well as now think) and what is intended, how much sooner would death be her choice, than so dreadful a situation! — “And how effectually would her story, were it generally known, warn all the sex against throwing themselves into the power of ours, let our vows, oaths, and protestations, be what they will!”

But let me beg of thee, once more, my dear Lovelace, if thou hast any regard for thine own honor, for the honor of thy family, for thy future peace, or for my opinion of thee (who yet pretend not to be so much moved by principle, as by that dazzling merit which ought still more to attract thee) to be prevailed upon — to be — to be humane, that's all — Only, that thou wouldest not disgrace our common humanity!

Hardened as thou art, I know, that they are the abandoned people in the house who keep thee up to a resolution against her. O that the sagacious fair one (with so much innocent charity in her own heart)

heart) had not so resolutely held those women at distance! — That as she boarded there, she had oftener tabled with them! Specious as they are, in a week's time, she would have seen through them; they could not have been always so guarded, as they were when they saw her but seldom, and when they prepared themselves to see her; and she would have fled their house as a place infected. And yet, perhaps, with so determined an enterpriser, this discovery might have accelerated her ruin.

I know that thou art nice in thy loves. But are there not hundreds of women, who, though not utterly abandoned, would be taken with thee for mere personal regards? Make a toy, if thou wilt, of principle with respect to such of the sex as regard it as a toy; but rob not an angel of those purities, which, in her own opinion, constitute the difference between angelic and brutal qualities.

With regard to the passion itself, the less of soul in either man or woman, the more sensual are they. Thou, Lovelace, hast a soul, though a corrupted one; and art more intent (as thou even gloriest) upon the preparative stratagem, than upon the end of conquering.

See we not the natural bent of idiots and the crazed? The very appetite is body; and when we ourselves are most fools, and crazed, then are we most eager in these pursuits. See what fools this passion makes the wisest men! What snivellers, what dotards, when they suffer themselves to be run away with by it! — An unpermanent passion! — Since, if (ashamed of its more proper name) we must call it

love, love gratified, is love satisfied — And love satisfied is indifference begun. And this is the case where consent on one side adds to the obligation on the other. What then but remorse can follow a forcible attempt?

Do not even chaste lovers chuse to be alone in their courtship preparations, ashamed to have even a child to witness to their foolish actions, and more foolish expressions? Is this deified passion in all its greatest altitudes, fitted to stand the day? Do not the lovers, when mutual consent awaits their wills, retire to coverts and to darkness, to complete their wishes? And shall such a sneaking passion as this, which can be so easily gratified by viler objects, be permitted to debase the noblest?

Were not the delays of thy vile purposes owing more to the awe which her majestic virtue has inspired thee with, than to thy want of adroitness in villany (I must write my free sentiments in this case; for have I not seen the angel?); I should be ready to censure some of thy contrivances and pretences to suspend the expected day, as trite, stale, and (to me, who know thy intention) poor; and too often resorted to, as nothing comes of them, to be gloried in; particularly that of Mennell, the vaporish Lady, and the ready-furnished house.

She must have thought so too, at times, and in her heart despised thee for them, or love thee (ungrateful as thou art!) to her misfortune; as well as entertain hope against probability. But this would afford another warning to the sex, were they to know her story; as it would show them what poor

pretences they must seem to be satisfied with, if once they put themselves into the power of a designing man.

If trial only was thy end, as was once thy pretence, enough surely hast thou tried this paragon of virtue and vigilance. But I knew thee too well, to expect, at the time, that thou wouldst stop there. Men of our cast put no other bound to their views upon any of the sex, than what want of power compels them to put. I knew, that from one advantage gained, thou wouldst proceed to attempt another. Thy habitual aversion to wedlock, too, well I knew; and, indeed, thou avowest thy hope to bring her to cohabitation, in that very letter in which thou pretendest trial to be thy principal view.

But do not even thy own frequent and involuntary remorse, when thou hast time, place, company, and every other circumstance, to favor thee in thy wicked design, convince thee that there can be no room for a hope so presumptuous? — Why then, since thou wouldst chuse to marry her rather than lose her, wilt thou make her hate thee for ever?

But if thou darest to meditate personal trial, and art sincere in thy resolution to reward her, as she behaves in it, let me beseech thee to remove her from this vile house. That will be to give her and thy conscience fair play. So entirely now does the sweet deluded excellence depend upon her supposed happier prospects, that thou needest not to fear that she will fly from thee, or that she will wish to have recourse to that scheme of Miss Howe, which has put thee upon what thou callest thy master-strokes.

But whatever be thy determination on this head; and if I write not in time, but that thou hast actually pulled off the mask; let it not be one of thy devices, if thou wouldest avoid the curses of every heart, and hereafter of thy own, to give her, no not for one hour, (be her resentment ever so great) into the power of that villanous woman, who has, if possible, less remorse than thyself; and whose trade it is to break the resisting spirit, and utterly to ruin the heart unpractised in evil.—O Lovelace, Lovelace, how many dreadful stories could this horrid woman tell the sex! And shall that of a Clarissa swell the guilty list?

But this I might have spared. Of this, devil as thou art, thou canst not be capable. Thou couldst not enjoy a triumph so disgraceful to thy wicked pride, as well as to humanity.

Shouldst thou think, that the melancholy spectacle hourly before me has made me more serious than usual, perhaps, thou wilt not be mistaken. But nothing more is to be inferred from hence (were I even to return to my former courses) but that whenever the time of cool reflection comes, whether brought on by our own disasters, or by those of others, we shall undoubtedly, if capable of thought, and if we have time for it, think in the same manner.

We neither of us are such fools, as to disbelieve a futurity, or to think, whatever be our practice, that we came hither by chance, and for no end but to do all the mischief we have it in our power to do. Nor am I ashamed to own, that in the prayers which my poor uncle makes me read to him, in

the absence of a very good clergyman who regularly attends him, I do not forget to put in a word or two for myself.

If, Lovelace, thou laughest at me, thy ridicule will be more conformable to thy actions than to thy belief.—Devils believe and tremble. Canst thou be more abandoned than they?

And here let me add, with regard to my poor old man, that I often wish thee present but for one half hour in a day, to see the dregs of a gay life running off in the most excruciating tortures, that the cholic, the stone, and the surgeon's knife, can unitedly inflict; and to hear him bewail the dissoluteness of his past life, in the bitterest anguish of a spirit every hour expecting to be called to its last account.—Yet, by all his confessions, he has not to accuse himself, in sixty-seven years of life, of half the very vile enormities, which you and I have committed in the last seven only.

I conclude with recommending to your serious consideration all I have written, as proceeding from the heart and soul of

Your assured friend,

J. BELFORD.

LETTER LVII.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

Tuesday Afternoon, *June 6.*

DIFFICULTIES still to be got over in procuring this plaguy licence. I ever hated, and ever shall hate, these spiritual lawyers, and their court. And now, Jack, if I have not secured victory, I have a retreat.

But hold — Thy servant with a letter —

* * *

A confounded long one, though not a narrative one — Once more in behalf of the Lady! — Lie thee down oddity! What canst thou write that can have force upon me at this crisis? — And have I not, as I went along, made thee to say all that was necessary for thee to say?

* * *

Yet once more, I will take thee up.

1 Trite, stale, poor (sayest thou) are some of my contrivances? That of the widow particularly? — I have no patience with thee. Had not that contrivance its effect at the time, for a procrastination? — And had I not then reason to fear, that the Lady would find enough to make her dislike this house? And was it not right (intending what I intended) to lead her on from time to time, with a notion, that a house of her own would be ready for her soon, in order to induce her to continue here till it was?

Trite, stale, and poor! — Thou art a silly fellow, and no judge, when thou sayest this. Had I not, like a blockhead, revealed to thee as I went along, the secret purposes of my heart; but had kept all in, till the event had explained my mysteries, I would have defied thee to have been able, any more than the Lady, to have guessed at what was to befall her, till it had actually come to pass. Nor doubt I, in this case, that, instead of presuming to reflect upon her for credulity, as loving me to her misfortune, and for hoping against probability, thou wouldest have been readier by far, to censure her for nicety and over-scrupulousness. And, let me tell thee, that had she loved me as I wished her to love me, she could not possibly have been so very apprehensive of my designs, nor so ready to be influenced by Miss Howe's precautions, as she has always been, altho' my general character made not for me with her.

But in thy opinion, I suffer for that simplicity in my contrivances, which is their principal excellence. No machinery make I necessary. No unnatural flights aim I at. All pure nature, taking advantage of nature, as nature tends; and so simple my devices, that when they are known, thou, even thou, imaginest, thou couldest have thought of the same. And, indeed, thou seemest to own, that the slight thou puttest upon them, is owing to my letting thee into them beforehand — undistinguishing, as well as ungrateful as thou art!

Yet, after all, I would not have thee think, that I do not know my weak places. I have formerly

told thee, that it is difficult for the ablest general to say what he will do, or what he can do, when he is obliged to regulate his motions by those of a watchful enemy. If thou givest due weight to this consideration, thou wilt not wonder that I should make many marches and countermarches, some of which may appear to a slight observer unnecessary.

But let me cursorily enter into debate with thee on this subject, now I am within sight of my journey's end.

Abundance of impertinent things thou tellest me in this letter; some of which thou hadst from myself, others that I knew before.

All that thou sayest in this charming creature's praise, is short of what I have said and written, on the inexhaustible subject.

Her virtue, her resistance, which are her merits, are my stimulatives. Have I not told thee so twenty times over?

Devil, as these girls between them call me, what of devil am I, but in my contrivances? I am not more a devil, than others, in the end I aim at, for when I have carried my point, it is still but one seduction. And I have, perhaps, been spared the guilt of many seductions in the time.

What of uncommon would there be in this case, but for her watchfulness?—As well as I love intrigue and stratagem, dost think, that I had not rather have gained my end with less trouble and less guilt?

The man, let me tell thee, who is as wicked as he

can be, is a worse man than I am. Let me ask any rake in England, if, resolving to carry his point he would have been so long about it? or have had so much compunction as I have had?

Were every rake, nay, were every man, to sit down, as I do, and write all that enters into his head or into his heart, and to accuse himself with equal freedom and truth, what an army of miscreants should I have to keep me in countenance!

It is a maxim with some, that if they are left alone with a woman, and make not an attempt upon her, she will think herself affronted—Are not such men as these worse than I am? What an opinion must they have of the whole sex?

Let me defend the sex I so dearly love. If these elder brethren of ours think they have general reason for their assertion, they must have kept very bad company, or must judge of women's hearts by their own. She must be an abandoned woman, who will not, shrink as a snail into its shell, at a gross and sudden attempt. A modest woman must be naturally cold, reserved, and shy. She cannot be so much, and so soon affected, as libertines are apt to imagine. She must, at least, have some confidence in the honor and silence of a man, before desire can possibly put forth in her, to encourage and meet his flame. For my own part, I have been always decent in the company of women, till I was sure of them. Nor have I ever offered a great offence, till I have found little ones passed over; and that they shunned me not, when they knew my character.

My divine Clarissa has puzzled me, and beat me out of my play: at one time, I hoped to overcome by intimidating her; at another by love; by the amorous fee-faw, as I have called it. And I have only now to join surprise to the other two, and see what can be done by all three.

And whose property, I pray thee, shall I invade, if I pursue my schemes of love and vengeance? Have not those who have a right in her, renounced that right? Have they not wilfully exposed her to dangers? Yet must know, that such a woman would be considered as lawful prize, by as many as could have the opportunity to attempt her? — And had they not thus cruelly exposed her, is she not a single woman? And need I tell thee, Jack, that men of our cast, the best of them (the worst stick at nothing) think it a great grace and favor done to the married men, if they leave them their wives to themselves; and compound for their sisters, daughters, wards, and nieces? Shocking as these principles must be to a reflecting mind, yet such thou knowest are the principles of thousands (who would not act so generously, as I have acted by almost all of the sex, over whom I have obtained a power); and as often carried into practice, as their opportunities or courage will permit. — Such, therefore, have no right to blame me.

Thou repeatedly pleadest her sufferings from her family. But I have too often answered this plea, to need to say any more now, than that she has not suffered for my sake. For has she not been made the victim of the malice of her rapacious brother

and envious sister, who only waited for an occasion to ruin her with her other relations; and took this as the first, to drive her out of the house; and, as it happened, into my arms? — Thou knowest how much against her inclination.

As for her own sins, how many has the dear creature to answer for to love and to me! — Twenty times, and twenty times twenty, has she not told me, that she refused not the odious Solmes in favor to me? And as often has she not offered to renounce me for the single life, if the implacables would have received her on that condition? — Of what repetitions does thy weak pity make me guilty?

To look a little farther back: canst thou forget what my sufferings were from this haughty beauty in the whole time of my attendance upon her proud motions, in the purlieus of Harlowe-Place, and at the little White Hart at Neale, as we called it? — Did I not threaten vengeance upon her then (and had I not reason?) for disappointing me of a promised interview?

O Jack! what a night had I in the bleak coppice adjoining to her father's paddock! My linen and wig frozen; my limbs absolutely numbed; my fingers only sensible of so much warmth, as enabled me to hold a pen; and that obtained by rubbing the skin off, and by beating with my hands my shivering sides! Kneeling on the hoar moss on one knee, writing on the other, if the stiff scrawl could be called writing! My feet, by the time I had done, seeming to have taken root, and actually unable to support me for some minutes! — Love and rage

kept then my heart in motion (and only love and rage could do it) or how much more than I did suffer, must I have suffered !

I told thee, at my melancholy return, what were the contents of the letter I wrote. And I showed thee afterwards, her tyrannical answer to it. Thou, then, Jack, lovedst thy friend; and pitiedst thy poor suffering Lovelace. Even the affronted God of Love approved then of my threatened vengeance against the fair promiser, though now with thee, in the day of my power, forgetful of the night of my sufferings, he is become an advocate for her.

Nay, was it not he himself that brought to me my adorable Nemesis; and both together put me upon this very vow, " that I would never rest till I had drawn in this goddess's daughter of the Harlowes to cohabit with me; and that in the face of all their proud family ? "

Nor canst thou forget this vow. — At this instant I have thee before me, as then thou sorrowfully lookedst. Thy strong features glowing with compassion for me; thy lips twisted; thy forehead furrowed; thy whole face drawn out from the stupid round into the ghastly oval; every muscle contributing its power to complete the aspect grievous; and not one word couldst thou utter, but Amen to my vow.

And what of distinguished love, or favor, or confidence, have I had from her since, to make me forego this vow ?

I renewed it not, indeed, afterwards; and actually,

for a long season, was willing to forget it; till repetitions of the same faults revived the remembrance of the former. And now adding to those the contents of some of Miss Howe's virulent letters, so lately come at, what canst thou say for the rebel, consistent with thy loyalty to thy friend?

Every man to his genius and constitution. Hannibal was called the father of warlike stratagems. Had Hannibal been a private man, and turned his plotting head against the other sex; or had I been a general, and turned mine against such of my fellow-creatures of my own, as I thought myself entitled to consider as my enemies, because they were born and lived in a different climate; Hannibal would have done less mischief; Lovelace more. — That would have been the difference.

Not a sovereign on earth, if he be not a good man, and if he be of a warlike temper, but must do a thousand times more mischief than I. And why? Because he has it in his power to do more.

An honest man, perhaps thou'lt say, will not wish to have it in his power to do hurt. He ought not, let me tell him: for, if he have it, a thousand to one but it makes him both wanton and wicked.

In what, then, am I so singularly vile?

In my contrivances, thou wilt say (for thou art my echo) if not in my proposed end of them.

How difficult does every man find it, as well as I, to forego a predominant passion! I have three passions that sway me by turns; all imperial ones. Love, revenge, ambition, or a desire of conquest.

As to this particular contrivance of Tomlinson and the uncle, which perhaps thou wilt think a black one; that had been spared, had not these innocent Ladies put me upon finding a husband for their Mrs. Townsend: that device, therefore, is but a preventive one. Thinkest thou, that I could bear to be outwitted? And may not this very contrivance save a world of mischief? For, dost thou think, I would have tamely given up the Lady to Townsend's tars?

What meanest thou, except to overthrow thy own plea, when thou sayest, that men of our cast know no other bound to their wickedness, but want of power; yet knowest this Lady to be in mine?

Enough, sayest thou, have I tried this paragon of virtue. Not so; for I have not tried her at all. — All I have been doing, is but preparation to a trial.

But thou art concerned for the means that I may have recourse to in the trial, and for my veracity.

Silly fellow! — Did ever any man, thinkest thou, deceive a woman, but at the expense of his veracity? How, otherwise, can he be said to deceive?

As to the means, thou dost not imagine, that I expect a direct consent. My main hope is but in a yielding reluctance; without which I will be sworn, whatever rapes have been attempted, none ever were committed one person to one person. And good queen Bess of England, had she been living, and appealed to, would have declared herself of my mind.

It would not be amiss for the sex to know, what our opinions are upon this subject. I love to

to warn them. I wish no man to succeed with them but myself. I told thee once, that though a rake, I am not a rake's friend.

Thou sayest, that I ever hated wedlock. And true thou sayest. And yet as true, when thou tellest me, that I would rather marry than lose this Lady. And will she detest me for ever, thinkest thou, if I try her, and succeed not? — Take care — Take care, Jack! — Seest thou, that thou warnest me, that I do not try without resolving to conquer?

I must add, that I have for some time been convinced, that I have done wrong, to scribble to thee so freely as I have done (and the more so, if I make the Lady legally mine); for has not every letter I have written to thee, been a bill of indictment against myself? I may partly curse my vanity for it; and I think I will refrain for the future; for thou art really very impertinent.

A good man, I own, might urge many of the things thou urgest; but, by my soul, they come very awkwardly from thee. And thou must be sensible, that I can answer every tittle of what thou writest, upon the foot of the maxims we have long held and pursued. — By the specimen above, thou wilt see that I can.

And pr'ythee tell me, Jack, what but this that follows would have been the epitome of mine and my beloved's story, after ten years cohabitation, had I never written to thee upon the subject, and had I not been my own accuser?

“ Robert Lovelace, a notorious woman-eater, makes his addresses in an honorable way to Miss

Clarissa Harlowe; a young Lady of the highest merit — Fortunes on both sides out of the question.

“ After encouragement given, he is insulted by her violent brother; who thinks it his interest to discountenance the match; and who at last challenging him, is obliged to take his worthless life at his hands.

“ The family, as much enraged, as if he had taken the life he gave, insult him personally, and find out an odious lover for the young Lady.

“ To avoid a forced marriage, she is prevailed upon to take a step, which throws her into Mr. Lovelace's protection.

“ Yet, disclaiming any passion for him, she repeatedly offers to renounce him for ever, if, on that condition, her relations will receive her, and free her from the address of the man she hates.

“ Mr. Lovelace, a man of strong passions, and, as some say, of great pride, thinks himself under very little obligation to her on this account; and not being naturally fond of marriage, and having so much reason to hate her relations, endeavours to prevail upon her to live with him, what he calls the life of honor: and at last, by stratagem, art, and contrivance, prevails.

“ He resolves never to marry any other woman: takes a pride to have her called by his name: a church-rite all the difference between them: treats her with deserved tenderness. Nobody questions their marriage but those proud relations of hers whom he wishes to question it. Every year a charming boy. Fortunes to support the encreasing family

increasing family with splendor. A tender father. Always a warm friend; a generous landlord, and a punctual paymaster. Now and then, however, perhaps indulging with a new object, in order to bring him back with the greater delight to his charming Clarissa—His only fault love of the sex—Which nevertheless, the women say, will cure itself—Defensible thus far, that he breaks no contracts by his roving.—

And what is there so very greatly amiss, as the world goes, in all this?

Let me aver, that there are thousands and ten thousands, who have worse stories to tell than this would appear to be, had I not interested thee in the progress to my great end. And besides, thou knowest that the character I gave myself to Joseph Leman, as to my treatment of my mistresses, is pretty near the truth.

Were I to be as much in earnest in my defence, as thou art warm in my arraignment, I could convince thee, by other arguments, observations, and comparisons (Is not all human good and evil comparative?) that though from my ingenuous temper, writing only to thee, who art master of every secret of my heart, I am so ready to accuse myself in my narrations; yet I have something to say for myself to myself, as I go along; though no one else, perhaps, that was not a rake, would allow any weight to it.—And this caution might I give to thousands, who would stoop for a stone to throw at me: “See that your own predominant passions, whatever they be, hurry you not into as much wicked-

ness, as mine do me. See, if ye happen to be better than I in some things, that ye are not worse in others; and in points too, that may be of more extensive bad consequence, than that of seducing a girl (and taking care of her afterwards) who from her cradle is armed with cautions against the delusions of men." And yet I am not so partial to my own follies as to think lightly of this fault, when I allow myself to think.

Another grave thing will I add, now my hand is in: "So dearly do I love the sex, that had I found, that a character for virtue had been generally necessary to recommend me to them, I should have had a much greater regard to my morals, as to the sex, than I have had."

To sum up all—I am sufficiently apprised, that men of worthy and honest hearts, who never allowed themselves in premeditated evil, and who take into the account the excellencies of this fine creature, will and must not only condemn, but abhor me, were they to know as much of me as thou dost. But, methinks, I would be glad to escape the censure of those men, and of those women too, who have never known what capital trials and temptations are; of those who have no genius for enterprise; of those who want rather courage than will; and most particularly of those who have only kept their secret better than I have kept, or wished to keep mine. Were these exceptions to take place, perhaps, Jack, I should have ten to acquit, to one that would condemn me. Have I not often said, That human nature is a rogue?

* * *

I threatened above to refrain writing to thee. But take it not to heart, Jack—I must write on, and cannot help it.

LETTER LVIII.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

Wednesday Night, 11 o'clock.

FAITH, Jack, thou hadst half undone me with thy nonsense, though I would not own it in my yesterday's letter: my conscience of thy party before.—But I think I am my own man again.

So near to execution my plot; so near springing my mine; all agreed upon between the women and me; or I believe thou hadst overthrown me.

I have time for a few lines preparative to what is to happen in an hour or two; and I love to write to the moment.

We have been extremely happy. How many agreeable days have we known together!—What may the next two hours produce!

When I parted with my charmer (which I did, with infinite reluctance, half an hour ago) it was upon her promise, that she would not sit up to write or read. For so engaging was the conversation to me (and, indeed, my behaviour throughout the whole of it was confessedly agreeable to her) that I insisted, if she did not directly retire

to rest, that she should add another happy hour to the former.

To have sat up writing or reading half the night, as she sometimes does, would have frustrated my view, as thou wilt observe, when my little plot unravels.

* * *

What—What—What now!—Bounding villain! wouldst thou choak me!—

I was speaking to my heart, Jack!—It was then at my throat.—And what is all this for?—These shy women, how, when a man thinks himself near the mark, do they tempest him!

* * *

Is all ready, Dorcas? Has my beloved kept her word with me?—Whether are these billowy heavings owing more to love or to fear? I cannot tell for the soul of me, of which I have most. If I can but take her before her apprehension, before her eloquence, is awake—

Limbs, why thus convulsed?—Knees, till now so firmly knit, why thus relaxed?—Why beat ye thus together? Will not these trembling fingers, which twice have refused to direct the pen, fail me in the arduous moment?

Once again, why and for what all these convulsions? This project is not to end in matrimony, surely!

But the consequences must be greater than I had thought of till this moment—My beloved's

destiny or my own may depend upon the issue of the two next hours!

I will recede, I think! —

* * *

Soft, O virgin faint, and safe as soft, be thy slumbers!

I will now once more turn to my friend Belford's letter. Thou shalt have fair play, my charmer. I will re-peruse what thy advocate has to say for thee. Weak arguments will do in the frame I am in! —

But, what, what's the matter! — What a double — But the uproar abates! — What a double coward am I? — Or is it that I am taken in a cowardly minute? for heroes have their fits of fear; cowards their brave moments; and virtuous women, all but my Clarissa, their moment critical —

But thus coolly enjoying thy reflections in a hurricane! — Again the confusion is renewed! —

What! Where! — How came it! —

Is my beloved safe? —

O wake not too roughly my beloved! —

LETTER LIX.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

Thursday Morning, 5 o'clock, *June 8.*

NOW is my reformation secured; for I never shall love any other woman!—O she is all variety! She must be ever new to me! Imagination cannot form; much less can the pencil paint; nor can the soul of painting, poetry, describe an angel so exquisitely, so elegantly lovely!—But I will not by anticipation pacify thy impatience. Altho' the subject is too hallowed for profane contemplation, yet shalt thou have the whole before thee as it passed: and this not from a spirit wantonning in description upon so rich a subject; but with a design to put a bound to thy roving thoughts. It will be iniquity greater than a Lovelace ever was guilty of, to carry them farther than I shall acknowledge.

Thus then, connecting my last with the present, I lead to it.

Didst thou not, by the conclusion of my former, perceive the consternation I was in, just as I was about to re-peruse thy letter, in order to prevail upon myself to recede from my purpose of awaking in terrors my slumbering charmer? And what dost think was the matter?

I'll tell thee —

At a little after two, when the whole house

was still, or seemed to be so, and, as it proved, my Clarissa in bed, and fast asleep; I also in a manner undressed (as, indeed, I was for an hour before) and in my gown and slippers, though, to oblige thee, writing on;—I was alarmed by a trampling noise over head, and a confused buz of mixed voices, some louder than others, like scolding, and little short of screaming. While I was wondering what could be the matter, down stairs ran Dorcas, and at my door, in an accent rather frightenedly and hoarsely inward, than shrilly clamorous, she cried out Fire! Fire! And this the more alarmed me, as she seemed to endeavour to cry out louder, but could not.

My pen, its last scrawl a benediction on my beloved, dropt from my fingers; and up started I; and making but three steps to the door, opening it, I cried out, Where! Where! almost as much terrified as the wench: while she, more than half undrest, her petticoats in her hand, unable to speak distinctly, pointed up stairs.

I was there in a moment, and found all owing to the carelessness of Mrs. Sinclair's cook-maid, who, having sat up to read the simple History of Dorastus and Faunia when she should have been in bed, had set fire to an old pair of callico window-curtains.

She had had the presence of mind, in her fright, to tear down the half-burnt vallens, as well as curtains, and had got them, though blazing, into the chimney, by the time I came up; so that I had the satisfaction to find the danger was happily over.

Meantime Dorcas, after she had directed me upstairs, not knowing the worst was over, and expecting every minute the house would be in a blaze, out of tender regard for her Lady (I shall for ever love the wench for it) ran to her door, and rapping loudly at it, in a recovered voice, cried out, with a shrillness equal to her love, Fire! Fire! — The house is on fire! Rise, Madam! This instant rise — if you would not be burnt in your bed! —

No sooner had she made this dreadful outcry, but I heard her Lady's door, with hasty violence, unbar, unbolt, unlock, and open, and my charmer's voice sounding like that of one going into a fit.

Thou mayest believe that I was greatly affected. I trembled with concern for her, and hastened down faster than the alarm of fire had made me run up, in order to satisfy her, that all the danger was over.

When I had flown down to her chamber-door, there I beheld the most charming creature in the world, supporting herself on the arm of the gasping Dorcas, fighting, trembling, and ready to faint, with nothing on but an under-petticoat, her lovely bosom half-open, and her feet just slipped in her shoes. As soon as she saw me, she panted, and struggled to speak; but could only say, Oh, Mr. Lovelace! and down was ready to sink.

I clasped her in my arms with an ardor she never felt before: my dearest life! fear nothing: I have been up — the danger is over — the fire is got under — And how, foolish devil! (to Dorcas) could you thus, by your hideous yell alarm and frighten my angel.

Oh Jack! how her sweet bosom, as I clasped her to mine, heaved and panted! I could even distinguish her dear heart flutter, flutter, flutter against mine; and for a few minutes, I feared she would go into fits.

Lest the half-lifeless charmer should catch cold in this undress, I lifted her to her bed, and sat down by her upon the side of it, endeavouring with the utmost tenderness, as well of action as expression, to dissipate her terrors.

But what did I get by this my generous care of her, and by my successful endeavour to bring her to herself?—Nothing (ungrateful as she was!) but the most passionate exclamations: for we had both already forgotten the occasion, dreadful as it was, which had thrown her into my arms: I, from the joy of incircling the almost disrobed body of the loveliest of her sex; she, from the greater terrors that arose from finding herself in my arms, and both seated on the bed, from which she had been so lately frightened.

And now, Belford, reflect upon the distance at which the watchful charmer had hitherto kept me: reflect upon my love, and upon my sufferings for her: reflect upon her vigilance, and how long I had lain in wait to elude it; the awe I had stood in, because of her frozen virtue and over-niceness; and that I never before was so happy with her; and then think how ungovernable must be my transports in those happy moments!—And yet, in my own account, I was both decent and generous.

But, far from being affected, as I wished, by an address so fervent (although from a man for whom she had so lately owned a regard, and with whom, but an hour or two before, she had parted with so much satisfaction) I never saw a bitterer, or more moving grief, when she came fully to herself.

She appealed to heaven against my treachery, as she called it; while I, by the most solemn vow, pleaded my own equal fright, and the reality of the danger that had alarmed us both.

She conjured me in the most solemn and affecting manner, by turns threatening and soothing, to quit her apartment, and permit her to hide herself from the light, and from every human eye.

I besought her pardon; yet could not avoid offending; and repeatedly vowed, that the next morning's sun should witness our espousals: but, taking, I suppose, all my protestations of this kind as an indication that I intended to proceed to the last extremity, she would hear nothing that I said; but, redoubling her struggles to get from me, in broken accents, and exclamations the most vehement, she protested, that she would not survive what she called a treatment so disgraceful and villainous; and, looking all wildly round her, as if for some instrument of mischief, she espied a pair of sharp-pointed scissors on a chair by the bedside, and endeavoured to catch them up, with design to make her words good upon the spot.

Seeing her desperation, I begged her to be pacified; that she would hear me speak but one word; declaring that I intended no dishonor to her;

and having seized the scissars, I threw them into the chimney; and she still insisting vehemently upon my distance, I permitted her to take the chair.

But, O the sweet discomposure! — Her bared shoulders and arms, so inimitably fair and lovely: her spread hands crossed over her charming neck, yet not half concealing its glossy beauties: the scanty coat, as she rose from me, giving the whole of her admirable shape, and fine turned limbs: her eyes running over, yet seeming to threaten future vengeance: and at last, her lips uttering what every indignant look and glowing feature portended; exclaiming as if I had done the worst I could do, and vowing never to forgive me; wilt thou wonder if I resumed the incensed, the already too much provoked, fair one?

I did; and clasped her once more to my bosom: but, considering the delicacy of her frame, her force was amazing, and showed how much in earnest she was in her resentment; for it was with the utmost difficulty that I was able to hold her: nor could I prevent her sliding through my arms, to fall upon her knees: which she did at my feet: and there, in the anguish of her soul, her streaming eyes lifted up to my face with supplicating softness, hands folded, dishevelled hair; for her night head-dress having fallen off in her struggling, her charming tresses fell down in naturally shining ringlets, as if officious to conceal the dazzling beauties of her neck and shoulders; her lovely bosom too heaving with sighs and broken sobs, as if to aid

her quivering lips, in pleading for her—In this manner, but, when her grief gave way to her speech, in words pronounced with that emphatical propriety, which distinguishes this admirable creature in her elocution from all the women I ever heard speak; did she implore my compassion, and my honor.

“Consider me, dear Lovelace,” (dear was her charming word!) “on my knees I beg you to consider me, as a poor creature who has no protector but you; who has no defence but your honor: By that honor! By your humanity! By all you have vowed! I conjure you not to make me abhor myself!—Not to make me vile in my own eyes!”

I mentioned the morrow as the happiest day of my life.

Tell me not of to-morrow. If, indeed, you mean me honorably, Now, This very instant, NOW! you must show it, and begone! You can never in a whole long life repair the evils you may NOW make me suffer.

Wicked wretch!—Insolent villain!—Yes, she called me insolent villain, altho’ so much in my power! And for what?—only for kissing (with passion indeed) her inimitable neck, her lips, her cheeks, her forehead, and her streaming eyes, as this assemblage of beauties offered itself at once to my ravished sight; she continuing kneeling at my feet, as I sat.

If I am a villain, Madam—And then my grasping, but trembling hand—I hope I did not hurt

the tenderest and loveliest of all her beauties — If I am a villain, Madam —

She tore my ruffle, shrunk from my happy hand, with amazing force and agility, as with my other arm I would have encircled her waist.

Indeed you are! — The worst of villains! — Help! dear blessed people! and screamed — No help for a poor creature! —

Am I then a villain, Madam? — Am I then a villain, say you? — and clasped both my arms about her, offering to raise her to my bounding heart.

O no! — And yet you are! — And again I was her dear Lovelace! — Her hands again clasped over her charming bosom: — Kill me! Kill me! — If I am odious enough in your eyes, to deserve this treatment; and I will thank you! — Too long, much too long, has my life been a burden to me! — Or, wildly looking all around her, give me but the means, and I will instantly convince you, that my honor is dearer to me than my life!

Then, with still folded hands, and fresh streaming eyes, I was her blessed Lovelace; and she would thank me with her latest breath, if I would permit her to make that preference, or free her from further indignities.

I sat suspended for a moment. By my soul, thought I, thou art, upon full proof, an angel and no woman! Still, however, close clasping her to my bosom, as I had raised her from her knees, she again slid through my arms, and dropt upon them: — “ See, Mr. Lovelace! — Good God! that

I should live to see this hour, and to bear this treatment!—See at your feet a poor creature, imploring your pity, who, for your sake, is abandoned of all the world! Let not my father's curse thus dreadfully operate! Be not you the inflicter, who have been the cause of it: but spare me, I beseech you spare me!—For how have I deserved this treatment from you?—For your own sake, if not for my sake, and as you would that God Almighty, in your last hour, should have mercy upon you, spare me!”—

What heart but must have been penetrated?

I would again have raised the dear suppliant from her knees; but she would not be raised, till my softened mind, she said, had yielded to her prayer, and bid her rise to be innocent.

Rise then, my angel! Rise, and be what you are, and all you wish to be! Only pronounce me pardoned for what has passed, and tell me you will continue to look upon me with that eye of favor and serenity which I have been blessed with for some days past, and I will submit to my beloved conquerers, whose power never was at so great a height with me, as now; and retire to my apartment.

God Almighty, said she, hear your prayers in your most arduous moments, as you have heard mine! And now leave me, this moment leave me, to my own recollection: in that you will leave me to misery enough, and more than you ought to wish to your bitterest enemy.

Impute not every thing, my best beloved, to design; for design it was not —

O Mr. Lovelace!

Upon my soul, Madam, the fire was real — (And so it was, Jack!) — The house, my dearest life, might have been consumed by it, as you will be convinced in the morning by ocular demonstration.

O Mr. Lovelace! —

Let my passion for you, Madam, and the unexpected meeting of you at your chamber-door, in an attitude so charming —

Leave me, leave me, this moment! — I beseech you, leave me; looking wildly and in confusion about her, and upon herself.

Excuse me, dearest creature, for those liberties, which, innocent as they were, your too great delicacy may make you take amiss —

No more! No more! — Leave me, I beseech you! Again looking upon herself, and around her, in a sweet confusion — Begone! Begone! —

Then weeping, she struggled vehemently to withdraw her hands, which all the while I held between mine. — Her struggles! — O what additional charms, as I now reflect, did her struggles give to every feature, every limb, of a person so sweetly elegant and lovely!

Impossible, my dearest life, till you pronounce my pardon! — Say but you forgive me! — Say but you forgive me!

I beseech you, begone! Leave me to myself, that I may think what I can do, and what I ought to do.

That, my dearest creature, is not enough. You must tell me, that I am forgiven; that you will see me to morrow, as if nothing had happened.

And then I clasped her again in my arms, hoping she would not forgive me —

I will — I do forgive you — Wretch that you are!

Nay, my Clarissa! And is it such a reluctant pardon, mingled with a word so upbraiding, that I am to be put off with, when you are thus (clasping her close to me) in my power?

I do, I do forgive you!

Heartily?

Yes, heartily!

And freely?

Freely!

And will you look upon me to morrow as if nothing had passed?

Yes, yes!

I cannot take these peevish affirmatives, so much like intentional negatives! — Say you will upon your honor.

Upon my honor, then — O now, begone! begone! — And never — never —

What never, my angel! — Is this forgiveness!

Never, said she, let what has passed be remembered more!

I insisted upon one kiss to seal my pardon — and retired like a fool, a woman's fool, as I was! — I sneakingly retired! — Couldst thou have believed it?

But I had no sooner entered my own apartment,

than, reflecting upon the opportunity I had lost, and that all I had gained was but an increase of my own difficulties; and upon the ridicule I should meet with below upon a weakness so much out of my usual character; I repented, and hastened back, in hope, that through the distress of mind which I left her in, she had not so soon fastened her door; and I was fully resolved to execute all my purposes, be the consequence what it would; for, thought I, I have already sinned beyond cordial forgiveness, I doubt; and if fits and desperation ensue, I can but marry at last, and then I shall make her amends.

But I was justly punished — for her door was fast: and hearing her sigh and sob, as if her heart would burst, my beloved creature, said I, rapping gently (her sobbings then ceasing) I want but to say three words to you, which must be the most acceptable you ever heard from me. Let me see you but for one moment.

I thought I heard her coming to open the door, and my heart leapt in that hope; but it was only to draw another bolt, to make it still the faster; and she either could not or would not answer me, but retired to the further end of her apartment, to her closet probably: and more like a fool than before, again I sneaked away.

This was my mine, my plot! — And this was all I made of it!

I love her more than ever! — And well I may! — Never saw I polished ivory so beautiful as her arms and shoulders; never touched I velvet so soft as her

skin: her virgin bosom—O Belford, she is all perfection!—Then such an elegance!—In her struggling losing her shoe (but just slipped on, as I told thee) her pretty foot equally white and delicate as the hand of any other woman, or even as her own hand!

But see'st thou not, that I have a claim of merit for a grace that every body hitherto had denied me? And that is, for a capacity of being moved by prayers and tears—Where, where, on this occasion, was the Callus, where the flint, by which my heart was said to be surrounded?

This, indeed, is the first instance in the like case, that ever I was wrought upon. But why? Because I never before encountered a resistance so much in earnest: a resistance, in short, so irresistible.

What a triumph has her sex obtained in my thoughts by this trial, and this resistance?

But if she can now forgive me—Can!—She must. Has she not upon her honor already done it?—But how will the dear creature keep that part of her promise, which engages her to see me in the morning, as if nothing had happened?

She would give the world, I fancy, to have the first interview over!—She had not best reproach me—Yet not to reproach me!—What a charming puzzle!—Let her break her word with me at her peril. Fly me she cannot—No appeals lie from my tribunal—What friend has she in the world, if my compassion exert not itself in her favor?—And then the worthy captain Tomlinson, and her uncle Harlowe, will be able to make all up for me, be my next offence what it will.

As to thy apprehensions of her committing any rashness upon herself, whatever she might have done in her passion if she could have seized upon her scissars, or found any other weapon, I dare say, there is no fear of that from her deliberate mind. A man has trouble enough with these truly pious, and truly virtuous girls (now I believe there are such); he had need to have some benefit from, some security in, the rectitude of their minds.

In short, I fear nothing in this Lady but grief: yet that's a slow worker, you know; and gives time to pop in a little joy between its sullen fits.

END OF THE FOURTH VOLUME.

of the reputation of her committing any
rashness upon herself, whatever the justice of the
in her position, it is not to be fixed upon her
folly, or passion, or any other weakness, I dare say
there is no part of that first letter which is not
man has made common with this kind of story
and with various girls, now I feel you there
which, perhaps, had been some time from home, some
familiarity in the relations of their minds.
In short, I fear nothing in this lady but grief,
yet that's a slow worker, you know; and give time
to pop in a little joy between its little fits.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME



Joh. Buchsta

Richardson, Samuel,

The history of Clarissa Harlowe in a series of letters

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